Issue 173 24 June 1995

CBW

Coach and Bus Week

The PSV industry's news w

BUY! 23 SELL! CLASSIFIED PAGES

IT'S GOT TO BE GORDONS

Giving disabled an equal opportunity

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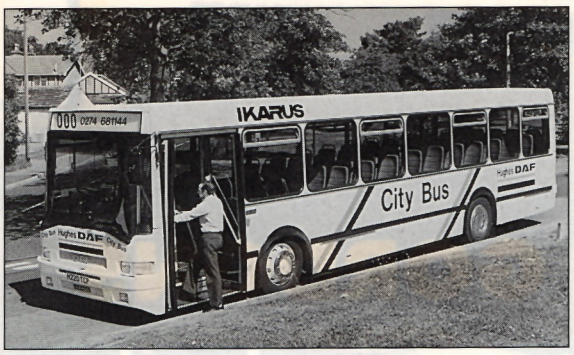

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Issue 173 24 June 1995

CBW
Coach and Bus Week
The PSV industry's news weekly

COACH and bus operators have had to cope with two doses of double standards this week.

First, we had Green Transport Week. Everyone involved in the transport industry, from Shell, which had to postpone a major environmental awards presentation in the wake of outrage over plans to scuttle the Brent Spar oil rig, to Dr Brian Mawhinney, who journeyed up to Nottingham to say a few words on the subject of thinking before you travel, tried to get their oar in.

But what is actually being achieved by a week of photo opportunities of politicians on push-bikes with their trouser legs tucked into their socks and free parking at Supertram stations, and how much of it, to use a buzz word, is sustainable?

Ironically, Green Transport Week also saw one genuine green initiative come to an end. Stagecoach East London's two-year experiment with Greenergy low-sulphur diesel has been judged a technical success, with smoke reduced by 30 or 40 per cent and fuel economy retained. But, in spite of this, Stagecoach East London will revert back to standard fuel because, with all its work being on fixed cost tenders, the premium price of Greenergy means it cannot be used in London without some form of financial support.

If Dr Mawhinney who, when only days into office made sneering remarks about buses "belching out fumes", cannot get London Transport Buses, which is controlled by his department, to do something about this, he should spare the rest of us his opinions about the topic in the future.

The second dose of double standards concerned the weekend's crash on the M6, which involved two coaches and 10 cars. As it happens, fatalities were confined to the cars and, as far as is known, no coach passengers were badly hurt. One of the coaches was set alight by a blazing car but only after it had been evacuated. However, compared to this year's earlier tragedy on the M4, the accident made little impact in the press or broadcast media. A realist might suggest the situation could have been different if the total number of fatalities was the same but a coach passenger had died.

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events

10 September: Bus Driver of Year Competition 1995 - National Finals, Blackpool. Contact Bryan Constable, Bus & Coach Training Ltd, Regency House, 43 High Street, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 1ET, tel 01923 896607

11-15 September: 23rd European Transport Forum (The PTRC Summer Annual Meeting), University of Warwick, Coventry, England. Details on 0181 741 1516, fax 0181 741 5993

18-22 September: International Symposium on Automotive Technology & Automation, Stuttgart, Germany. Details on 0181 681 3069, fax 0181 686 1490.

14 October: Third National Roads Transport History Symposium, National Motor Museum, Beaulieu. Details from Teresa Godwin (R&RTHC), The library, National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, Brockenhurst, Hampshire, SO42 7ZN

12-14 October: Coach & Bus '95, NEC, Birmingham. Details from CPT on 0171 831 7546

17-19 October: Fourth Career & Workwear show, Business Design Centre, London. Details from Lina Laderman PR, tel and fax 0181 882 2654

19 October: Buses Worldwide meeting, Peter White on Zimbabwe. Fred Tallent Hall, Drummond Street, Euston, London NW1. Details from Ian Johnston, secretary, 3 Cypress Drive, Fleet, Hampshire GU13 9HE

19-25 October: Thirteenth European Coach and Bus Fair, Kortrijk Halls, Kortrijk, Belgium. Official opening and press day, 19 October. Fair will be built around themes of 100th anniversary of the bus, 75th anniversary of the coach, and safety. Details from BAAV, Motestraat 41, B - 8800 Roeselare, Belgium, tel +32 (0) 51 22 60 60, fax +32 (0) 51 22 92 73

▼ Coach and Bus

FirstBus shares go on to the market

After GRT-Badgerline merger gets final go-ahead

by Richard Simpson

TRADING in FirstBus shares began last Friday after the GRT - Badgerline merger was given final approval by the High Court in London and the Court of Session in Edinburgh.

This followed a decision by president of the Board of Trade Michael Heseltine not to oppose the merger, which creates the second-largest bus group in Britain (*CBW*, 17 June). Its 20-plus subsidiary companies range from Western National in Cornwall and Devon to Grampian Transport in Aberdeen.

In a joint statement, Badgerline chairman Trevor Smallwood and GRT chairman Moir Lockhead said: "The merger will not only accelerate the ability of the two companies to develop their current businesses but will create a leading UK bus company which will be better positioned to deliver greater value to shareholders than either company could achieve on its own."

FirstBus says it is committed to carrying on with innovations introduced by its two constituent companies as it establishes itself as an industry leader. These include: high-quality services with modern vehicles, service initiatives such as park-and-ride schemes and guided busways, and using five per cent of its pre-tax profits to buy shares for distribution to staff.

The new company has a turnover approaching £350 million and employs a workforce of 14,500. Fleet strength is around 5,600.

▼ Coach and Bus

Industry insurance event

A BETTER working relationship between the coach and bus industry and the UK motor insurance market is the aim of a presentation being made by the CPT in Manchester next week.

Veronica Palmer, director general of CPT UK, will deliver the keynote address at the event, which will be held at Greater Manchester Buses South Ltd's training centre in Bennett Street, Ardwick.

All aspects of safe coach and bus operation will be discussed, including training and qualification requirements. The programme starts at 11am.

▼ Coach and Bus

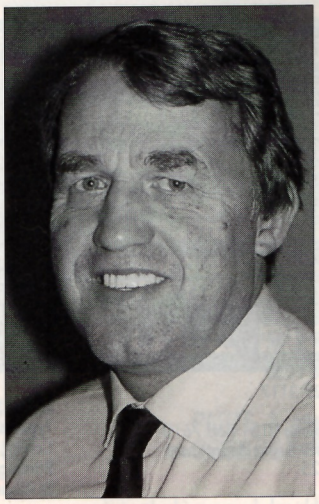
Directors gave 5.7 million shares as gifts

FOUR GRT directors gave family members and trusts just under 5.7 million company shares, worth over £15 million. The transfer took place four days before the merger with Badgerline, although the company emphasised the two events were unconnected. A statement to the Stock Exchange said: "These transfers by way of gift are part of the individual directors' long-term tax planning. Gifts are a common way of avoiding inheritance tax."

Company bus driver Gary Lockhead, and his brothers Stuart and Sean - all sons of GRT chairman Moir Lockhead - each received shares worth over £400,000.

▼ Coach and Bus

Executive chairman awarded OBE



Trevor Smallwood OBE

FIRSTBUS Executive chairman **Trevor Smallwood** has been awarded the OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Mr Smallwood, 48, is a former president of the Confederation of Passenger Transport, and was executive chairman of Badgerline before the FirstBus merger.

He was on holiday abroad when the announcement was made.

Also recognised in the Queens Birthday Honours was National Federation of Bus Users chairman **Dr Caroline Cahm**, who was awarded an MBE.

"It is very encouraging to receive this sort of recognition for my work and indeed that of all those who help and support the NFBU," she said.

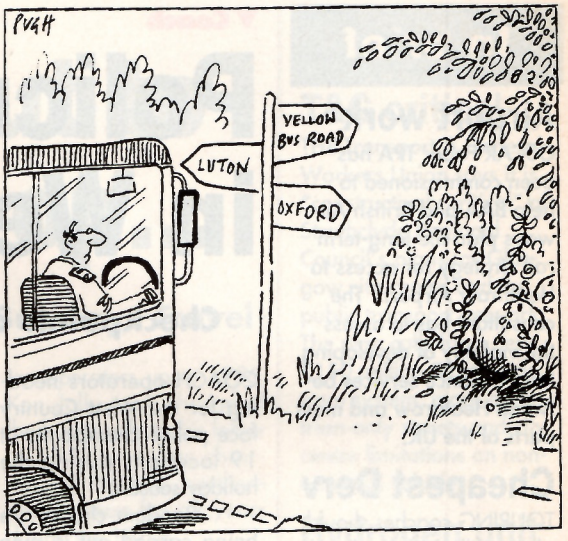
"I was very pleased to receive congratulations from Confederation of Passenger Transport chairman Ted Hesketh and the permanent secretary at the Department of Transport."

Dr Caroline Cahm, MBE

▼ Coach and Bus

It's the end of the Yellow Bus Road

Motts Coaches' bus operation to go to The Shires



by Mike Morgan

MOTTS Coaches' bus operation, Yellow Bus, is to be sold to British Bus subsidiary, The Shires, on 24 July, bringing to an end the Aylesbury-based company's four-year expansion into the local service market.

The sale comes hot on the heels of a similar deal which transferred Buffalo's 24-vehicle bus fleet to The Shires, formerly Luton & District (*CBW*, 27 May). and reflects the increasing vulnerability felt by small to medium-sized bus fleets in the face of the strong presence of the big bus groups.

Yellow Bus' territory is now between British Bus and GAG - competing directly with Oxford Bus Company, which GAG bought last year.

Seventeen vehicles and around 20 drivers transfer to The Shires, leaving Motts with its 34-coach business and a handful of long-established off-peak shopper services.

Managing director, Roger Mott said the company had no regrets over the sale despite losing some "first-class staff" and recent investment in new buses.

He said: "The writing was on the wall because the playing field had changed.

"We're getting out while the going is good."

Neither are there regrets at going into bus. Back in July 1991 the decision was made against a background of recession-hit coach hire rates and "it was felt we had to do something to keep our size of fleet to justify our fixed overheads at that time."

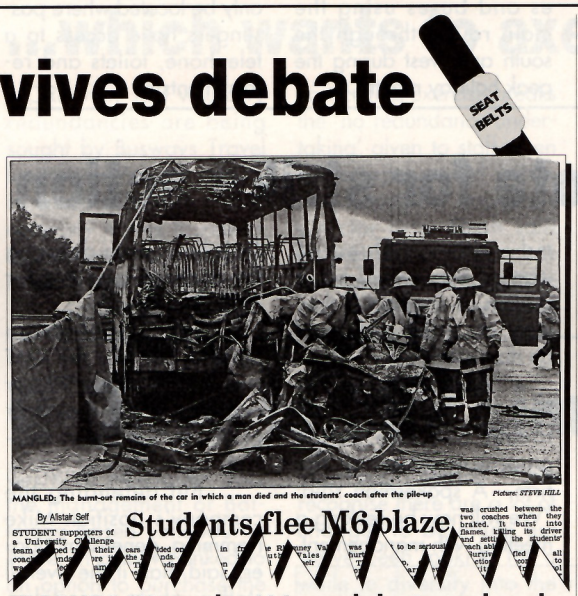
However, Mr Mott admits that the commitment to local service work was not without its problems. He said: "I had no idea how difficult it was to run a modern coach fleet alongside a bus fleet.

"We found it exceedingly difficult to get to grips with and I have felt that, over the past 18 months, the coach side has suffered."

After last year's new bus investment, Motts has improved its coach fleet age profile after spending £350,000 on vehicles up to three years old as a commitment to staying in coaching.

▼ Coach

Crash revives debate


SEAT BELTS
MANGLED: The burnt-out remains of the car in which a man died and the students' coach after the pile-up
Picture: STEVE HILL
By Alistair Self
Students flee M6 blaze

FLASHBACK: to the M6 crash last weekend

OPERATORS' worst accident nightmares were realised last weekend when a coach involved in a 12-vehicle motorway multiple pile-up was engulfed by fire.

All 45 passengers and two crew members of the Credition-based Bow Belle-owned coach evacuated safely in four minutes. This has fanned the flames of the seatbelt debate with the fear that seatbelts, had they been fitted and worn, would have slowed passengers' escape.

Although accident investigators have yet to report, it appears that the coach was neither speeding, nor using the outside lane.

It was heading north on the M6 for Granada Studios with a private party of Exeter University students. Bow Belle partner, Keith Phillips said the driver braked hard as an accident happened ahead in the centre lane between junctions 12 and 13 near Cannock. He had contemplated using the outside lane as an escape route, but a car travelling in the nearside lane drove into his path between the 57-seat Bow Belle Scania K92/Duple 320 and a second coach taking pensioners on holiday from South Wales to Blackpool.

After the impact the car burst into flames, killing its driver and setting the students' coach ablaze.

Mr Phillips said: "The second driver was able to take charge and direct the passengers out of the emergency door.

"Thank goodness they didn't have seatbelts because there's a good case for suggesting that, especially if they had been older, they might not have all escaped."

● **Safety debate: turn to letters, pages 28-29**

▼ Coach

Drivers' wages survey

COACH drivers can earn up to £418 per week according to the first major survey of wage rates in the industry commissioned for *CBW*.

Yet these high earners, supported by basic hourly rates of £6 and overtime of £8, are at one end of a spectrum which starts at £3 an hour for the lowest paid - £2.05 for part-time drivers.

Marksman's Research File was conducted last month. Operators were asked to quote in confidence wage rates paid to full and part-time drivers. A full analysis of the results is published on pages 23 to 25.

With wages the largest single item in coach costings, interest in the survey was exceptional from all regions of the UK.

Regional variations are surprisingly small when expressed as an average.

Lowest is the West Country at £3.56 per hour, highest is London and the south east at £4.58.

▼ Stop Press

Sacked drivers accept offer

DRIVERS sacked for striking at Eastern National's Colchester depot have voted 80 per cent in favour of an improved offer from the company of £400 per year of service. They are also free to apply for vacancies but Eastern National md Robin Orbell said there would be no automatic reinstatement.

The dispute started on 8 November, 1994 when 105 drivers were dismissed. The Transport and General Workers Union-run free bus service will end at the end of this month.

In brief

Airport work

OSCAR Faber TPA has been commissioned to help BAA and British Airways plan the long-term rail strategy for access to Heathrow Airport. The consultant has to assess the viability of developing long-distance services between Heathrow and most parts of the UK.

Cheapest Derv

TOURING coaches should plan to fill up in Southend, but not Inverness, according to the PHH Allstar fuel report for May. The Essex town had the nation's cheapest forecourt DERV while in Inverness it costs £2.63 per gallon.

Staff ride free

STAFF at Heathrow Airport had the chance to sample the area's bus services for free as part of Green Transport Week. Thursday was declared Bus Day and staff who normally drove into work were able to ride free on local bus services.

Tram trip deal

SOUTH Yorkshire PTE is waiving its usual £2 parking fee at the new Parkway Central car park on the Sheffield Supertram system, on Saturdays, As part of the Green Transport Month initiative, the PTE is offering a free return tram trip for every driver.

Free parking

TYNE & Wear PTE has removed parking charges at its Callerton Parkway Metro station during June as an incentive to car users to use public transport. The initiative is being promoted as part of the AMA's Green Transport Month, with free parking already being available at the Regent Centre Metro car park.

● More Green Transport Week news: Page 8

▼ Coach

Police plan blitz in West Country

Checkpoints at 19 locations in holiday season

by Richard Simpson

COACH operators heading for the West Country face police checkpoints at 19 locations during the holiday season.

Random checks are being carried out in nine counties after a smaller exercise on the M5 in Avon, Somerset and Devon last Summer found that half the 236 vehicles examined had some kind of defect, and some were issued with immediate prohibitions.

This year's road safety blitz, codename Operation Tourist, is being co-ordinated by Avon and Somerset Constabulary and will also involve the police forces from Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Thames Valley and Wiltshire.

Police and Department of Transport Vehicle Inspectorate officials will cover every major route in and out of the West Country.

Chief inspector Martyn Snell of the Avon and Somerset traffic department said:

"We are making these checks because of concern about the safety of the huge number of coaches and buses using the main routes through the south and west during the peak holiday months.

"Our checks last year proved that some of these coaches are in a shocking state and a potential danger not just to the passengers but to everyone using the roads.

"No-one should be delayed for more than half and hour while their coach or bus is checked.

"We apologise in advance for any inconvenience that may be caused but these checks are being made in their interests to ensure they arrive at their destinations safely."

Checkpoints will only be located where passengers have access to a telephone, toilets and refreshments.

▼ Bus

Drivers vote for strike action

RMT members at Devon General have voted to take industrial action in a dispute over union recognition.

Devon General had earlier indicated it no longer wanted to recognise the union for the purposes of pay negotiations.

And in a letter to the 200 staff, Devon General md Harry Blundred warned they would be in breach of contract if they went on strike and could be dismissed.

According to the RMT the vote was 2.1 in favour of strike action among members at the firm. A spokesman said: "We will now be seeking a meeting with management.

Devon General could face industrial action

They have been deferring the decision over this for some time now."

The spokesman pointed out that the RMT represented nearly 90 per cent of the drivers employed by the Devon General.

But defending the company's position Mike Hemming, general manager, said that, if the overall staff numbers were taken into account, less than 50 per cent were RMT members.

He said: "The RMT has exclusive rights to negotiate with the company which means more than 50 per cent of staff cannot express their views to their employers.

"There has been no move by Devon General to withdraw recognition of the RMT. It is merely to give all employees the same rights."

CBW

▼ Coach and Bus

No more free rides

ESSEX County Council is pressing ahead with its plans to end free county-wide transport for grammar school pupils (*CBW*, 17 June).

The council's education committee voted by 31 to13 to end the system of bus and rail passes and school coaches for pupils attending the eight grammar schools in the county.

According to the controlling Liberal Democrat-Labour coalition, free travel for the county's 3,476 qualifying grammar school pupils costs £1.6 million per year.

Liberal Democrat chairman of the transport committee, Derek Hardy, said the current policy was "extravagant and unaffordable." No other authority provided free transport over unlimited distances: "Each grammar school has a common catchment area and that is the whole of Essex. If a selective school in one corner of the county wants to admit a pupil from another, it can.

"Essex County Council has to find a way of getting the child to school as well as paying the bill."

Mr Hardy said one pupil at Southend School for Boys left a village north of Braintree each morning at 6.30am in a taxi for Braintree rail station. From there, he caught a train for Witham, where another train took him to Shenfield and a third on to Southend.

Then a bus took him from the station to school. The one-way journey time was two hours and 10 minutes, and the annual cost to the council was £2,446 - greater than the cost of his education.

A full council meeting will vote on the proposal next month, and it is virtually certain to be accepted.

▼ Coach and Bus

Rejig at GAG

GO-AHEAD Group is reorganising its north eastern competitive bus units, with a new focus on OK Travel and the closure of the Tynerider competition unit (*CBW*, 15 April).

Described as a "tidying-up exercise" by commercial director Chris Moyes, the changes will see a reduction of services at Low Fell Coaches and Shaws Coaches subsidiaries, and an increase in competitive services from OK.

Low Fell operations will also move to the Team Valley garage of OK and work under the aegis of Charles Marshall as Bob and Pauline Tindall retire from Low Fell.

The Cross-tyne fleet will be updated by the transfer of two Volvo B10Bs from OK, and the Saltmeadows Road depot will be closed and sold.

Shaws operations will also be reduced considerably, with operations concentrating on the original Stanley to Chester le Street route. Voyager coach operations will come under OK, with the possibility of National Express operations moving from Chester le Street to Philadelphia depot.

OK Travel had originally challenged Go-Ahead subsidiaries by registering competitive services to infill between peak-hour PTE contracts. As the company still holds a large number of peak contracts, it will use its spare capacity to register defensive services.

"We need a rationalisation of facilities in the Gateshead area," said Mr Moyes,"and OK is best suited to become our competition unit."

● THE Go-Ahead Group has moved its directorate and headquarters from the Bensham offices in Gateshead to central Newcastle.

▼ Bus

Jolly sells out to Stagecoach op...

Fleet laid up and goodwill sold to Busways Travel

by Andrew Jarosz

LONG-ESTABLISHED north east independent Ken Jolly of South Hylton bows out of bus operation this weekend, after 73 years service, over 30 of them on the main route into Sunderland city centre.

Mr Jolly is laying up his eight-strong Bedford fleet and has sold the goodwill to Stagecoach subsidiary Busways Travel, which replaces his vehicles on Monday with Dennis Darts. The future of Jolly's12 staff, some of whom have been employed for 20 years, is uncertain, but all have been offered work with Busways.

Mr Jolly said he was reluctant to let the business go: "I suppose, at 70, it's time for me to retire, but I shall now follow my other passion of giving organ recitals."

Jolly's built up its business by taking over five competing South Hylton operators up to 1956. Ken Jolly took charge of the business from his father in 1952 and was chairman of the BCC northern area section for six years during the 1970s.

He was awarded the Queens Silver Jubilee Medal for services to transport in 1977 and lists among his achievements a successful campaign to ban alcohol from coaches, and the effective segregation of supporters' coaches at football matches..

▼ Bus

...which wants to axe 100 jobs

MORE than 100 voluntary redundancies are being sought by Busways Travel in engineering and administration sections, as the company moves to reduce maintenance costs with the influx of new vehicles.

Critics say that the cost-cutting exercise breaks the 'no redundancy undertaking' given to staff when the company sold out to Stagecoach but operations director Peter Nash said employment guarantees overrode everything. "We are revising our working practices and are now accessing group purchasing, which means we can buy in engineering services."

Three years ago Busways closed its central works and moved maintenance and engineering to the depots.

▼ Coach and Bus

Q-Drive to buy Limebourne

Q-DRIVE has taken over the management of Battersea-based Limebourne Travel in a move linked to an option to purchase the 23-coach business.

South Eastern and Metropolitan traffic commissioner Brigadier Michael Turner granted a variation of the Q-Drive O-licence within 48 hours to allow the business to continue trading.

Limebourne's O-licence had been revoked for five years and its director, Peter Inzani, has been banned from holding an O-licence for two years (*CBW*, 17 June).

Len Wright, Q-Drive chairman, said: "We recognise there are a lot of changes to be made but we've been looking for a while to diversify into the coach and travel market."

Mr Wright did not rule out the possibility of using the opportunity to run buses out of Battersea, though he stressed Q-Drive is committed to investment in the coch side. He said: "Our priority is to improve the quality and efficiency of Limbourne in the charter and incoming tourist market while looking at moving into the corporate market."

Limebourne's O-licence had been revoked

In brief

T&G critical

THE Transport & General Workers Union says it is "constructively critical" of Strathclyde Regional Council's plans for Glasgow city centre and the public transport network. The plan calls for a new £150 million Strathclyde tram system, more pedestrian-only streets and city centre limitations on non-essential vehicles.

Hydrogen unit

MAN has developed a liquid hydrogen-fuelled engine for bus applications which has entered trial operation during the past few weeks. The 12-litre H 2866 UH power unit has spark ignition (Bosch Motronic) and is fitted with a dual fuel system to allow optional operation on petrol.

Order upped

BEBB Travel of Llantwit Fardre, Pontypridd, has increased its order for Mercedes 811D chassis with 33-seat 'Nouvelle' bus bodywork by Autobus Classique. The company will now take delivery of eight buses as opposed to six which will be fitted with dual role seating. The 'Nouvelle' is to be launched on 6 August.

Deregulation

TOLL charges at some river crossings could be deregulated, according to a consultative document published by the Department of Transport.

Voith for Vogel

VOGEL chassis lubrication systems are now distributed in the UK by transmission specialists Voith Engineering. Vogel centralised lubrication systems are offered for buses, coaches, midis and minis, and can be easily retrofitted. Further details from Voith on 0181 667 0333.

▼ Coach and Bus

City Diesel 'admirable'

But too expensive for use on fixed-cost LT tenders

by Richard Simpson

STAGECOACH East London has just successfully completed a two-year trial of Greenergy low-sulphur diesel — but it won't be able to buy any more of the more expensive environmentally-friendly fuel because it is tied to fixed-cost LT tenders.

Engineering director Peter Duff said: "As a large bus operator we understand the effect diesel has on the urban environment and acknowledge our responsibilities when it comes to finding new ways of reducing emissions.

"To begin with we were sceptical of the claims made about City Diesel. However, after the comprehensive two-year trial, we can say that the fuel performed admirably on all our urban routes - well above expectations.

"We hope to extend our use of the fuel in the future but, under the present regime, the cost is prohibitive."

City Diesel impressed Stagecoach E. London

The tests were carried out over a two-year period across the complete range of bus and engine types currently being used by Stagecoach East London.

In the course of tests Stagecoach East London performed extensive monitoring of the vehicle fuel consumption and emissions levels compared to their buses using standard diesel. These demonstrated a 30 to 40 per cent reduction in smoke with no reduction in economy. City Diesel also has a lower waxing point than standard fuel, making for easier starting in the Winter.

▼ Coach and Bus

Mawhinney launches Green Transport Week

LAUNCHING Green Transport Week, Transport Secretary Dr Brian Mawhinney turned the spotlight on the role individual decisions can play in the fight against congestion and pollution.

Dr Mawhinney said: "Pollution and congestion are not simply problems caused by other people. Each of our individual transport decisions do matter. Each time we turn the ignition key we make a direct impact on the environment."

The Secretary of State added that central and local government also influence the way people behave and the choices available to them.

"That is why I am determined to expand these choices. There should be alternatives to the car wherever they can sensibly be provided."

As well as providing some funding for major projects such as light-rail schemes, Dr Mawhinney claimed Government transport policy was allowing private enterprise to offer motorists more potential choices.

"We have seen this happen in the bus industry, where privatisation and deregulation increased the range of services on offer. Privatisation of the rail industry will allow new operators to adapt services to attract more passengers."

▼ Bus

Bus priority exhibitions

LONDON'S proposed bus priority network is subject of a series of exhibitions in the north east of the capital as London Transport Buses seeks to introduce measures to speed up buses on around 500 miles of roads.

Features of the proposed scheme include: bus priority at traffic lights, more bus lanes and relocating traffic queues so buses can bypass them.

Residents and bus users are invited to the exhibitions and can voice their opinions on response forms. All comments will be taken into account before plans are finalised and it is anticipated the measures will be introduced on an experimental basis within the next 12 months.

▼ Bus

Portsmouth Transit wins ISO 9002

TRANSIT Holdings subsidiary Portsmouth Transit celebrated the start of Green Transport Week by winning ISO 9002 quality accreditation.

It took Portsmouth Transit, which runs as Red Admiral and Blue Admiral, just 10 months to achieve the award, compared to the average 17 months.

The company is the third of Transit Holdings' operations to achieve the prestigious award and systems are now in place to help ensure the buses run as reliably as possible.

General manager Mick Ramsey said: "Achieving ISO 9002 is a public statement of our commitment to providing a quality, reliable transport network which offers the people of Hampshire a realistic alternative to the car."

Mr Ramsey urged local authorities to step up their programmes of bus priority measures in a bid to encourage more bus use.

Group training manager Colin France added: "Of course, we can try as hard as we can to keep our end of the bargain but, as long as the bus shares road space with other traffic, there will inevitably be problems caused by road congestion."

CBW

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▼ Coach

Fourth accessible coach for Gordon's

Disabled given same standards as the able-bodied

by Mike Morgan

PIONEER accessible coach operator, Gordon's of Rotherham, has added a fourth coach to its fleet adapted to carry wheelchairs.

The company has 20 years experience running coaches which carry passengers in wheelchairs. David Gordon said: "We started running lift-equipped coaches in 1975 to satisfy an education contract.

"The business had developed from there and we are now the biggest operator in the area of luxury coaches which are able to accept travellers on wheelchairs. I believe it is important to provide disabled travellers with the same standards of comfort as our other customers rather than see them having to travel in welfare buses."

Gordon's wheelchair-equipped coaches are used mainly for private hire and have hand-picked drivers who are trained to cater for the special requirements of less able travellers.

The family business was founded in 1915 by David's grandfather. David's father - now 87 - is still actively involved in the operation and retains a PCV driving licence, making him potentially Britain's oldest PSV driver.

● The latest fleet addition is a Volvo B10M - Gordon's first with Plaxton Premiere bodywork. A side-mounted lift by Passenger Vehicle lifts of Smethwick has been installed by Yeates Bus & Coach who supplied the coach.

■ **See Deals and Dealers: pages 30&31.**

▼ Coach and Bus

Low-floors and lifts on show at Manchester exhibition

MANCHESTER played host to the Buses for All 95 conference and exhibition last weekend when G-Mex brought together operators, manufacturers, planners, passengers and potential passengers.

Staged as part of Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard Users' (DaRT) All Aboard campaign for equal access to public transport, the exhibition staged a display of European and UK low-floor and lift-equipped buses from Volvo, Scania, Neoplan, Omni, Merseytravel SMART project and Derbyshire County Council. Also on display was a range of passenger lift and transportation safety equipment.

All Aboard's Andy Holt said: "The theme of the day was one of renewal and regeneration of the bus industry. For the travelling public and transport sector the long-term viability of coach and bus services is essential."

● Twenty-nine low-floor buses are due to enter service in the Greater Manchester area over the next two years on routes M10, 600, 42, 19, 3, 508, 560 and 545 (*CBW*, 25 March).

Cash from the sale of GM Buses is being used to support the purchases with Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority giving a grant of £25,000 per vehicle. Timeline is getting six; Stagecoach Ribble, GM Buses North; and British Bus subsidiary, Starline, are getting five each; Bullocks and Stuarts each get four.

Operators have to guarantee the buses will be used on the route specified for two years and will remain in Greater Manchester for 10 years. In addition they must provide cost and patronage information about the vehicles to GMPTE to allow further research.

Staged as part of campaign for equal access

▼ Light Rail

Row over plan to extend Metrolink

PROPOSALS to extend the Metrolink tramway have provoked controversy between employee-owned GMS Buses and its former owner, the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive.

GMS Buses is among the objectors at the Manchester inquiry conducted by David Bushby, an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State, into the plans to take Metrolink through south Manchester to the airport.

GMS Buses claims its will have to lay off staff if the extension through south Manchester to the airport goes ahead. It also contends that Metrolink will receive an operating subsidy.

But GMPTE has hit back, with director general Chris Mulligan describing the GMS Buses reaction as "incredibly negative."

He said the only Government money Metrolink will receive will to towards the capital costs and it will support up to 9,300 jobs by the year 2005. "By linking residential communities along the route we will enable more people in Greater Manchester to reach areas of employment.

"Surely GMS Buses would not wish to deny this expansion in access to jobs because of their own inability to respond to a change in the market?"

Metrolink: controversy

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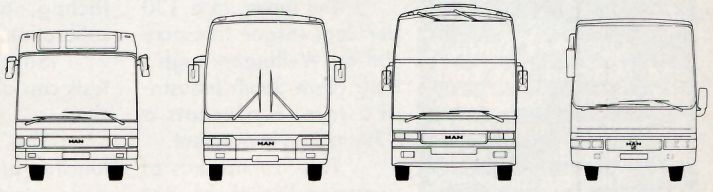

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▼ Coach

Stainless steel 425 stands test of time

Manufacturers see nine-year-old Duple dissected

by Mike Morgan

DUPLE'S innovative 425 has stood the test of time if the condition of a 59-seat vehicle built in May 1986 is anything to go by.

The 425 was unusual because it was a British-built integral design which used stainless steel as the single material in the chassis-frame monocoque construction.

Manufacturers from Italy, Sweden, Germany, Portugal, USA, Canada and the UK took up an invitation from Cromweld Steels, supplier of the utility stainless steel 3CR12, to take a close unrestricted look at how the material and vehicle has performed after 1.5 million miles of operation with Arun Coaches of Horsham, Sussex, a four-vehicle fleet run by Hugo Miller.

A micro camera connected to a video monitor allowed visual access to the interior of the steel sections to check the out-of-sight parts of the coach. Seats and inner panels were removed to reveal sections originally installed unpainted. Yet the assembled engineers could find no traces of pitting or metal loss.

A small hole left by a sharp object which had accidentally pierced the underside of the coach several years ago had exposed unprotected metal, yet there was no deterioration evident.

Dr Barry Mealing, chairman of Hestair Duple 10 years ago, led the 425 design team. Now a transport industry consultant, he joined the inspection day. He said: "I had no regrets about using 3CR12. In fact, I have repeated the decision on several occasions since."

Although rollover regulations were not around 10 years ago, testing was done which, according to Dr Mealing, proved that existing materials were unsuitable for coach safety. The tests involved were tougher than the latest requirements, but he felt were more realistic to an actual crash situation.

By good design, in his experience, it was possible, in his view, to actually use less material with 3CR12, create a rigid strong coach or bus, and still meet current EC crash requirements.

Ian Warrington, Cromweld's technical director, said the coach, like the steel, had re-written the engineering rulebook - where materials like mild steel had been used for their strength and economy, with aluminium for weight efficiency.

● Production of the 425 ceased when Plaxton took over and closed Duple's Blackpool plant in 1989, although the marque was briefly revived, with 12 vehicles assembled in France at the Carrosserie Lorraine factory and finished at Scarborough.

No traces of pitting or metal loss were found

International engineers inspected the 425

▼ Coach and Bus

Operators calm down

STRONG protests have forced a traffic-calming rethink by Leicestershire County Council.

Two severe humps at Quorn have been rebuilt after threats to re-route services.

Operators Kinchbus and Midland Fox complained to the council when the traffic-calming ramps first appeared.

Kinchbus proprietor Gilbert Kinch said: "Our buses go over the five humps 84 times a day."

▼ Coach and Bus

New HQ site for Cummins Diesel

CUMMINS Diesel, the sales, service and parts organisation supporting Cummins engines in the UK and Ireland, has moved its HQ and East Midlands branch operations.

The move, to a 130 per cent larger five-acre site on Wellingborough's Park Farm South Industrial Estate, represents a £3.4 million investment.

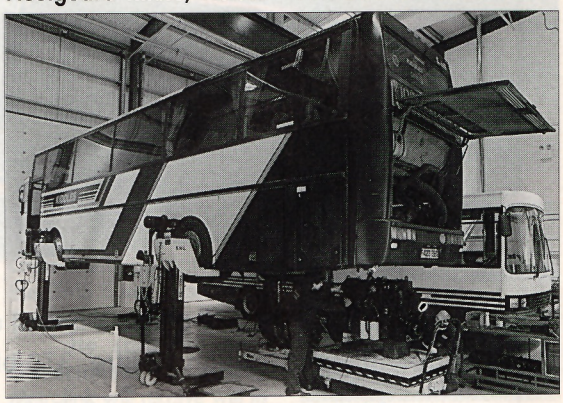
The turnover of Cummins Diesel, in supporting the growing parc of engines in coach, bus, truck, industrial, rail and marine installations, is currently over 80,000 units and growing by about 6,000 a year.

Full vehicle servicing (beyond engine attention) is available to operators, along with Lucas Kienzle tachograph fitment and calibration.

Smoke emission tests can also be done on site.

The headquarters function at Park Farm includes stocking £2 million of B, C, L, M, N and K series engines, guaranteeing off-the-shelf availability.

The warehouse also holds Cummins parts, Fleetguard filters, Holset turbochargers, Bosch parts and Recon CBW remanufactured



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Citibus: disappointing financial performance and engineering problem

▼ Bus

GMN completes its consolidation in NW

Bolton Coachways and Citibus Tours absorbed

by Andrew Jarosz

OLDHAM-based Greater Manchester Buses North absorbs its Citibus Tours subsidiary this week, in a general consolidation which also involves absorption of Bolton Coachways, vacation of its Bootle premises and integration of services.

Citibus Tours was acquired from the Lynton Group earlier this year (*CBW*, 11 February). The purchase of Bolton Coachways and withdrawal from Merseyside was agreed as part of the peace deal with MTL, which sees MTL pulling its services out of the Greater Manchester area.

The Citibus deal, which involved services and 60 buses based at Chadderton, had progressed without substantial change, although GMN commercial director Rodney Dickinson felt disappointed in its financial performance. "We have also had more engineering problems than we bargained for, and the best solution is to integrate the company into existing GMN depots," he said.

Services, staff and most of the vehicles will be integrated into the operations of the Oldham and Queens Road depots.

All Citibus drivers will be joining enlarged Special Operating Units (SOUs) which operate at lower costs with separate rates of pay.

Citibus' erstwhile owners Martin Wild and Roger Green, who continued to manage Citibus, may be staying with GMN, although the situation is unclear at present. The Chadderton base is being retained and will be used for refurbishment of vehicles.

GMN is pulling out of its Bootle and Cuthbert Street, Bolton, depots as part of the MTL deal. Bolton Coachways is operating as a separate SOU out of GMN's Bolton depot and a small number of Bootle staff are transferring to Wigan depot.

Mr Dickinson said GMN would be saving around 40 vehicles through the reorganisation and most of the vehicles withdrawn would be Dodge minibuses. "We are refurbishing some of our acquired MetroRiders and retaining the majority of the Citibus deckers, which are quite sound."

▼ Coach

Browns to the rescue

EDINBURGH-based coach operator Browns stepped in at the eleventh hour to 'rescue' an underprivileged children's holiday.

The week-long trip to Barry Island by the group was scuppered when its coach hire with Leith operator Heather Travel fell through. A newspaper story alerted Browns to the situation and it rose to the occasion, not only assuring that the Krazzie Kids Klub's £1,200 accommodation payment was safe but knocking off £200 of the coach hire cost.

"We are not going to make any money on this," said operator Alastair Brown. "But we couldn't watch children like these get let down. A story like this reflects on the whole coaching industry and we are keen to make sure its good name is not ruined."

▼ Bus

CMB will keep franchise

CONTROVERSY surrounds the Hong Kong Government's intention to renew the operating franchise for 1,000-bus China Motor Bus beyond 1997.

Secretary for transport Haider Burma said the new three-year franchise would involve cutting some routes and make the management more accountable.

The announcement triggered a barrage of criticism, against a background of poor service, and a call to close down the territory's second largest bus operator.

CMB has 133 routes after losing 26 to Hong Kong Citybus when the franchise was last renewed in 1993 and the company has threatened to close should the government further cut its operation.

An amendment to regulations extending the government's power to take control of a franchise bus company fuelled speculation that it would seize the company's assets and take over its operations. Earlier CMB had pushed ahead with the sale of its Aberdeen depot in defiance of government opposition. CBW

Hong Kong Government decision criticised

▼ Tachograph

Chart used to convict driver

Fined for speeding after accident

by Michael Jewell

A TACHOGRAPH chart has been used to convict a lorry driver of speeding in the run-up to a fatal accident on the A75 Stranraer-Dumfries road in March last year.

William Millar, of 55 Lettercreeve, Bally, Ballymena, a driver employed by McBurney Bros, of Co Antrim, had denied the charge before Dumfries Sheriff's Court.

The court heard that Mr Millar's tachograph chart showed he had averaged 44 mph, with peaks of 55 mph to 67 mph on the A75, which has an LGV speed limit of 40 mph over almost the whole of the 80-plus-mile length from the ferry port at Cairnryan to the scene of the accident just south of Dumfries. Mr Millar had been exonerated of any blame for the accident.

Defending, Michael Whiteford pointed out that the only real evidence was the tachograph chart and when tachograph records were first introduced the Government had made it plain that tachograph records would not be used to pursue speeding offences.

Fiscal John Martin maintained that was only an indication of policy at that time and that there was nothing in the legislation that prevented tachograph charts being produced in evidence.

Mr Millar was fined £100 and given four penalty points. CBW

'Tachos can be used in evidence', Sheriff's Court rules

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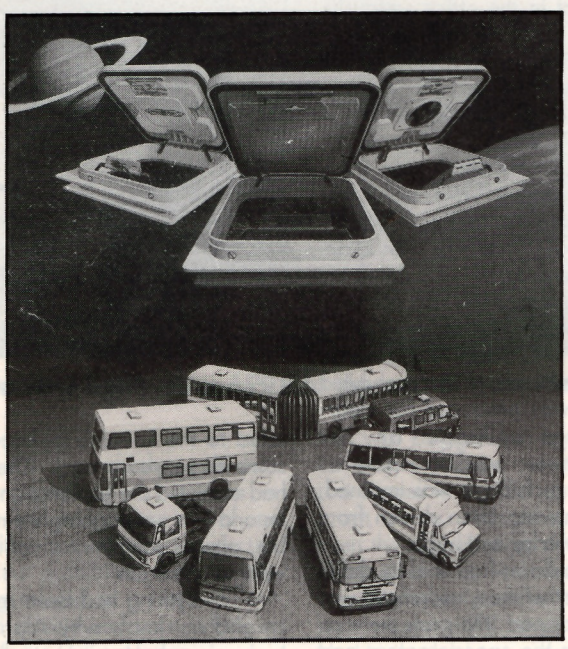

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▼ Employment

Tribunal reserves judgment on driver

A CARDIFF Industrial Tribunal has reserved judgment on a claim for unfair dismissal brought by Rhondda coach driver Wayne Jones against Walter Thomas, on the basis he was "constructively dismissed" — that is, forced to resign by the actions of his employer.

Mr Jones told the tribunal he had worked for Mr Thomas, who trades as Thomas Coaches, of Bus Depot, Aberrhondda Road, Porth, for three years until he finished work in October of last year. His initial job was driving on school contracts and other excursions throughout the day.

A few months later he was asked to undertake European tours and he enjoyed that work. He was taken off a European trip in July last year and told only to go to Dover, which he thought was unfair as there had been no complaints about him previously. He spoke to Mr Thomas that night and he told him another driver was taking the coach to Europe.

Mr Thomas said Mr Jones then refused to do a contract run after the disagreement over the European tour, claiming it was too late at night. He did not consider that was a valid reason because, when drivers worked abroad, they were on call 24 hours a day.

After that Mr Jones decided to leave and he asked him to finish him, said Mr Thomas.

No redundancy payment was mentioned until Mr Jones came to see him a couple of days later and asked to be made redundant. He told him he would have to work a month's notice but Mr Jones declined and just walked out.

Tribunal chairman John Thomas said they were reserving their decision as there were a lot of complicated issues that needed to be looked into.

▼ Maintenance

School contracts ban, a and licence duration cu

Former director made false statements to obtain fuel duty rebate

by Michael Jewell

PRIDE of the Road (Travel) has been banned from operating any school contract services by North Eastern deputy traffic commissioner Mark Hinchliffe.

The deputy commissioner also reduced the authorisation on the company's licence from 40 to 35 vehicles and cut its duration till the end of next March, instead of at the end of September 1998.

The company, of 31 St Johns Road, Birby, Huddersfield, had been called to disciplinary proceedings before the deputy commissioner because of maintenance problems at its Hull depot and the conviction of one of its directors for making false statements to obtain fuel duty rebate grant.

In February director Alan Platt pleaded guilty at Leeds Crown Court to two counts of making false statements in relation to fuel duty rebate grant, being fined £1,500 on each offence.

'It was obvious some of the drivers did not take the driver defect report sheet kept in the office seriously'

For the company, John Backhouse handed the deputy commissioner a copy of a letter from Alan Platt, resigning from his position as director and company secretary of the company. He said the remaining directors were Mr Platt's father Frederick and his brother-in law Wilfred Moston. Alan Platt had admitted being reckless in failing to account properly for distance operated on the company's local services.

Mr Hinchliffe said the offences, which involved around £90,000 of public money, gave him great concern and he took a grave and dim view of them.

DoT vehicle examiner Paul Rust said he had carried out a maintenance investigation at Hull in December after the issue of two prohibition notices and an allegation from a former Pride of the Road driver that vehicles were being operated without their speedometers working.

He examined five vehicles, issuing one delayed and two immediate prohibitions. In both the latter cases the engine was contaminated with oil which constituted a fire hazard.

The fitter had admitted not lifting the inspection hatch when inspecting the vehicles. The condition of the vehicles suggested the maintenance system was not being properly operated.

The inspection intervals were said to be every four weeks but there were instances of vehicles going 12 weeks between inspections. It was obvious some of the drivers did not take the driver defect report sheet kept in the office seriously, from the sarcastic and humorous entries written on it.

One of the vehicles he examined had a speedometer reading of 174,047 miles, the same as recorded on an inspection sheet dated September 1993, and it was clear that vehicle had been operated for over 12 months with a defective speedometer.

The company's staff admitted several other vehicles were being operated with defective speedometers. When one of the prohibited vehicles was produced for clearance, the mileage on the speedometer was the same as when the prohibition was imposed, despite having been driven from Hull to Beverley and back.

The driver had said he didn't know whether the speedometer was working or not. No parts were on order for the speedometers and there was no mention of a defective speedometer on the defect report sheet when he visited the company the following day, said Mr Rust.

In May 1994 a vehicle was given an immediate prohibition for dense black smoke. The driver had reported it the night before so it had been sent out in that condition.

Two immediate and two delayed prohibitions had been issued during 1994, three of which were varied when additional defects were found when the vehicles were presented for clearance.

Mr Moston said excess smoke was a problem with Leyland Nationals and six new DAF vehicles had been introduced into the fleet to try to overcome the problem. Alan Platt had never had any involvement with the Hull operation. The Crown Court matters related to the keeping of accounts some three years ago. The DoT had accepted the explanations given and was not pursuing the matter but, after a complaint a police investigation began.

Licence duration was also cut f

Everything had been repaid. He did not know why Alan Platt had resigned. He was not asked to do so. He had just said it was something he wanted to do. Alan Platt had not filled in the fuel duty rebate grant forms.

. He just signed them and the auditors filled in the figures from

uthorisation reduction, t for Pride of the Road

grant and operator had unacceptably high number of prohibitions

information given them by members of staff. The mileages had been wrong, with some runs doubled up in error.

The Hull operation included three shoppers services operated three to four days a week, and three schools services for Hull Grammar School. They had difficulty in finding parts to repair the speedometers and had fitted hubometers to all the vehicles to record mileage.

The vehicles were on local services in and around Hull City Centre. There was no question of any driver having been reported

om the end of September 1998 to the end of next March

for speeding.

All the vehicles now had working speedometers. When vehicles had been taken out of service they had not been inspected. A recent prohibition for a broken spring related to a Huddersfield-based vehicle and was nothing to do with the Hull operation.

Since the vehicle examiner's visit the manager at Hull had been replaced and the fitting staff increased from two to three. If Hull was under pressure, vehicles were taken to Huddersfield for maintenance. He accepted supervision had been lacking in the past, said Mr Moston. A director now visited Hull once a week.

Mr Hinchliffe said one vehicle had been inspected in April 1994 and again in July 1994, with 15,000 miles in between but Mr Moston said that vehicle was on a shoppers' service and was always in the yard. It was looked at regularly but the paperwork had not been done.

Financial evidence was heard in private at the company's request.

Mr Backhouse said legal action was being taken against the company's auditors over the incorrect figures in the fuel duty rebate grant claims. The directors had been the subject of persistent complaints over three years from a former employee, and the stress that had caused could be one reason Mr Moston had not picked up the maintenance problem sooner. The company had already taken steps to resolve the problem.

When older vehicles were operated, things did go wrong between regular inspections. There was no record of any convictions for maintenance-related matters. The nature of the operation was such that speed was not a factor when driving from stop to stop in the city centre.

Mr Hinchliffe said that on any view there had been an unacceptably high number of prohibitions in 1994 and it must have been obvious to anyone things were going wrong at Hull.

The fact the speedometer on one vehicle had not been working for over 12 months was a disgraceful state of affairs and the gaps between inspections showed a lamentable failure.

If vehicles were not regularly inspected, eventually something dreadful happened. Any director would have realised, from looking at the records, maintenance at Hull had been on the point of collapse. Alan Platt's conviction also reflected on the company as a whole. Together, they formed a picture of shambolic management.

However, there had been recent changes and improvements that hopefully in future would not allow safety standards to slip.

The conduct of Alan Platt was extremely serious and grave and it was only his action in resigning that had saved the company from losing its good repute.

Though he thought the company was operating on a knife edge financially, he was satisfied it was of the appropriate financial standing bearing in mind the action he was taking. The improvements put in place were as yet untested. It was up to the company to demonstrate to the public it could be trusted with their lives.

In cancelling the Hull Grammar School service registrations and banning the company from operating any local services carrying children to and from school, Mr Hinchliffe said he was protecting public safety until the company had demonstrated its maintenance arrangements were adequate. CBW

▼ Licensing

Pair get OK to run night-club decker

TWO young men proposing to run a tour of Manchester night-spots have obtained a licence to operate a double decker.

Matthew Frost and Marc Keating, trading as The Disco Express, of 17-19 Park Lane, Poynton, Cheshire, had applied for a new national licence at a Manchester public inquiry before North Western traffic commissioner Martin Albu.

Mr Frost said they were looking at running a double decker to provide a service called the Manchester Night-club Tour aimed at private party-goers.

They would be picked up at a designated meeting place in the city centre and would then be taken to four different venues, spending about 90 minutes at each.

On arrival they would be given VIP treatment by the clubs. The pair were seeking to provide a total hassle-free evening. They were also looking at hiring out the bus to companies for shows etc.

Questioned by the commissioner, Mr Frost said they did not have the bus yet. They were looking for one about 12 years old costing about £3,000. They had drivers laid on through a friend who owned a bus company.

Their nominated transport manager was a Mr Atkinson, who was the head of department at a Macclesfield school. He had been involved in the planning process. Maintenance would be carried out by B & D Travel and the vehicle would be kept in a secure park belonging to Bryants, 300 yards away from B & D Travel's premises.

Mr Albu said he thought the proposed income figures were a bit optimistic but Mr Frost pointed out they were based on the full package price of the tour, including the night-club entrance fees.

Granting the licence, Mr Albu said the partners seemed to know what they were doing.

▼ Europe

At last! Le Shuttle gets coaches OK

Full service should be running by end of the Summer

by William Golden

AFTER months of delays, speculation and rumour, coach operators have finally got the green light for travel on Le Shuttle.

Parent company Eurotunnel announced the launch of Le Shuttle service following the company being given an operating certificate by the Intergovernmental Commission. An invitation service will start for coaches and minibuses from Monday. There will be a minimum of one departure every hour in each direction. The frequency will be increased from 10 July.

Allyson Andrews, a spokeswoman for Eurotunnel, said the company was delighted to see the service finally get up and running.

She said: "We always said we hoped to get Le Shuttle coach service in operation by the middle of Summer.

"The service from Monday will be an invitation service and we hope to be running a full service by the end of the Summer or the beginning of the Autumn.

"Reactions from coach operators have been very positive. They are dying to use the service because it will give them greater flexibility."

Georges-Christian Chazot, Eurotunnel's chief executive, said : "We are pleased to have been granted an operator's certificate and, most importantly, to be able to offer our coach operator customers a competitive service this Summer.

"We believe that Le Shuttle offers coach operators - and their passengers - the major advantage of speed, frequency, and simplicity, which will appeal strong to day-return and short-break customers."

Regular services started on Le Shuttle on 22 December of last year after several months of tests and it was the delays in getting that service up and running which had a knock-on effect on the testing and subsequent launch of the coach service.

The announcement will not only be welcomed by coach operators but it will come as a relief to Eurotunnel's bankers, who are renegotiating a financial package with the company which has debts of more than £8 billion.

Le Shuttle to run coach service from Monday

▼ UK

Workshop to promote city

KEY figures of the Edinburgh tourism industry will be in the north of England next month to attract more coach business to the city.

Representatives from hotels and attractions throughout the Scottish capital will be attending a workshop at the Leeds Marriott Hotel on Wednesday 12 July.

Venues represented will include Edinburgh Castle and Edinburgh Zoo, while representatives from the new Stakis Edinburgh Airport Hotel and a 50-bedroom hotel opening near the city's new conference centre will be giving details of group rates.

Edinburgh Tourist Board officials will use the workshop to launch an Ideas for Group Visits leaflet, which will promote major events and special weekend rates at Edinburgh hotels from October to December.

Alison Rankin, the board's travel trade manager, said: "We recognise the important role that the United Kingdom travel trade plays in developing individual and group business to Edinburgh, particularly in the off-season months.

"This workshop provides the ideal forum to communicate new Edinburgh products to the north of England trade."

All coach and tour operators are invited to attend the workshop, which starts at 5.30pm.

For more details contact Alison Rankin or Fiona Drane at the Edinburgh Tourist Board, 4 Rothesay Terrace, Edinburgh EH3 7RY, tel 0131 226 6800.

Edinburgh to be promoted at Leeds

▼ Europe

Blooming good offers

THERE are some blooming good offers for coach groups visiting Holland this Summer. Golden Tulip Hotels and Tulip Inns is offering bed and breakfast at 13 establishments across the country from £23 per night per person based on two sharing.

Choose from the Tulip Inn Oosterpark, in Amsterdam, or one deep in the Dutch countryside, such as the Golden Tulip Epe, in Epe. Half board is available for a supplement of from £15.

The special group rates are valid from 1 July to 31 August, subject to availability, and are valid only for parties of 20 or more. Coach parking is free at all the hotels and inns, and there is one free place per group.

For details call Golden Tulip International on 00 31 35 28 45 88.

▼ UK

CTC's new PR agency

COMPANYCARE PR of Reading is the new press relations agency appointed by the CTC.

CTC chairman Gerry Topiol said: "Companycare impressed us with their range of ideas and sheer enthusiasm. The aim of the CTC is to promote the image of coach tourism as a thriving industry which provides luxury trips to hundreds of destinations."

Lynne Hattam, Companycare's consumer and business-to-business account director, said: "We are very excited about having the opportunity to handle the press and public relations for the CTC."

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▼ UK

Cautionary tale for operators

Anthony R Ostrin, senior partner of Yaffe Jackson Ostrin solicitors, Liverpool, has a cautionary tale for coach operators and tour organisers

A TOUR company advertised a fixed-price holiday in Corfu in its brochure, which seemed a bargain to one holidaymaker, a Mr Hollis.

He went to the travel agent's, where full details were displayed on a screen, resulting in him booking.

However, a second screen had the same holiday for £182 cheaper than the brochure price. Furthermore, there was no disclaimer advertised on-screen.

The agent said the holiday had to be taken at the brochure price and the price on the second screen was a mistake.

Mr Hollis at first insisted on paying the lower price but agreed to pay the brochure price because it was a last-minute booking.

He made it clear he would complain on his return. Contacting his local trading standards officer, Mr Hollis argued the tour company, via its agent, had displayed a misleading indication of the holiday price, making the agent guilty of misrepresentation.

In the case of Berkshire CC v Olympic Holidays, Mr Hollis argued that, as there was no disclaimer on the second screen, the company could not deny that price, and that was the price of the holiday, because anything else would be misleading.

The operator accepted this, but argued the statutory defence of due diligence. It said there was a disclaimer in the brochure, but not on the screen. Its omission was an unfortunate 'one-off'.

This defence was accepted by the magistrates and the prosecution against Olympic Holidays was dismissed. The local authority appealed, arguing that an on-screen disclaimer was a reasonable protection and its absence should have resulted in a computer discrepancy. Consequently, the defence of due diligence had to be rejected.

The High Court - surprisingly in my opinion - backed the original decision..I believe the company could - and should - have put a disclaimer on the screen, or at least given the customer sufficient notice that, in the event of a discrepancy, the brochure price would prevail.

My advice is to ensure there is a disclaimer for all information given to customers in brochures and on screens.

In the event of a discrepancy, a notice should be displayed in a prominent position detailing which price stands.

▼ EUROPE

Ireland brochure from wholesaler

BOTEL Services, the Rotherham-based tour wholesaler, is capitalising on the growth of its Irish programme by launching a dedicated Ireland brochure this month.

The new publication will features Botel's most comprehensive selection of tours to date, and will be in addition to its selling of mainland Europe.

For more information call Botel Services Ltd in Wickersley, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, on 01709 703535, or Botel South on telefax 01303 875336.

▼ UK

Take advantage of Sunday Special

ANY coach group touring the rolling heartland of England can take advantage of a Sunday Special, which provides half-board for £29 per person at the three-star Hinckley Island Hotel in Leicestershire (above).

This special deal applies to parties of more than 30 and is available on Sunday nights until June 1996, subject to availability. Also on offer in the same package is a free, costumed tour of Coventry and/or a ghost hunt in Leicester.

Contact Deborah Shingler, the Hinckley Island Hotel marketing manager, on 01455 631122 for more details.

CBW

Eurowatch

WEATHER

City	Average temperature last week	City	Average temperature last week
Athens	29C/84F	Madrid	26C/79F
Amsterdam	13C/55F	Oslo	16C/61F
Berlin	18C/64F	Paris	20C/68F
Brussels	14C/57F	Rome	22C/72F
Dublin	13C/55F	Stockholm	22C/72F
Lisbon	26C/79F	Vienna	20C/68F
Luxembourg	63C/63F	Zurich	17C/63F

DIESEL PRICES

(Courtesy AA Roadwatch)

Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling	Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling
Austria	0.48	Netherlands	0.50
Belgium	0.51	Norway	0.68
Eire	0.53	Poland	0.23
France	0.47	Portugal	0.43
Germany	0.50	Spain	0.43
Italy	0.50	Sweden	0.62
Luxembourg	0.41	Switzerland	0.61

HOLIDAY POUND

Country	Currency exchange rate	Country	Currency exchange rate
Austria	15.25 Sch / £	Italy	2,540 Lire / £
Belgium	44.50 BFr / £	Netherlands	2.44 Gld / £
Denmark	8.52 K / £	Norway	9.76 NKr / £
Eire	0.97 Punt / £	Portugal	230 Es / £
France	7.61 FFr / £	Spain	187.5 Pta / £
Germany	2.19 DM / £	Sweden	11.35 SKr / £
Greece	352 D /£	Switzerland	1.79 SFr / £

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BEDFORD YNT PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200

1984, 51 seats power door, radio/PA/cassette, brown/beige interior, white/blue exterior, MoT June 96.

BEDFORD YMPS PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200

1983, 33 reclining seats, power door, grey/blue moquette, white exterior, MoT 26.04.95.

DAF SB 2300 DHTD 585 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200

1984, 53 fixed seats, power door, beige/red moquette, white exterior, MoT 20.02.96. **choice of 2 only 1 remains.**

DAF MB200 DKVL 600 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 III

1986, to be completely refurbished with 49 reclining seats and toilet, exterior repainted white, MoT 04.11.95.

DAF MB 230 DKFL 615 CAETANO ALGARVE

1988, 53 reclining seats plus courier seat, continental door red/maroon moquette power door, retrimed exterior white, MoT 24.01.96.

DAF SB2300 DUPLE 340

1988, 53 recliners and courier seat, 6SP ZF, Splitter gearbox, radio/Pa/cassette. Centre O/S sunken toilet, centre O/S continental door. Water boiler, TV only, MoT, 12.04.95. **Choice of 2.**

TOYOTA (6 CYL) OPTIMO CAETANO

1988, 18 reclining seats plus courier seat, Power door, radio, boot, curtains, MoT. 23.02.96.

TOYOTA (6 CYL) OPTIMO CAETANO

1990, 18 reclining seats plus courier seat, power door, boot radio curtains, MoT. 24.03.96.

MAN 16290 JONCKHEERE DEAUVILLE

1989, 6 speed ZF gearbox, 49 reclining seats, Sutrak air conditioning, Double glazing, O/S/R floor mounted toilet, curtains, radio/PA cassette, painted all white, New MoT. 02.03.96.

MERCEDES 608D DEVON CONVERSION

1983, 19 seats, 5 speed gear box, boot, luggage racks, radio, beige curtains, white exterior, MoT 13.02.96.

SCANIA ELITE K113 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500

1992, 7 speed manual GR801 comfort sheft gearbox, ABS, road speed governor, variable top speed limiter, exhaust brake, kneel facility, ferry lift, autolube, electric retarder, Webasto heating, inswinging entrance door. Central continental door, centre toilet, half rear emergency door, 3 roof vents, forced air ventilation, aircraft lockers, crew compartment, grey moquette, 49 reclining seats, centre gangway carpet, double glazed, side curtains, rear curtains, side blinds, aluminium wheels, Blaupunkt radio/Pa system, MoT. 09.09.95

VOLVO B10MT PLAXTON 4000 RS

1989, 65 reclining seats plus twin courier, TV/Video Stero, toilet, double glazing, sun blinds, curtains, carpets, drinks, fridge, drivers bunk, crew seat, MoT. 25.02.86.

VOLVO B10 MKIII VAN HOOL ALIZEE

1990, ZF 6 speed S690 manual gearbox, Telma Retarder, autolube, ferry lift, road speed governor, variable top speed limiter exhaust brake, webasto heating, plug front entrance door, centre continental door, half rear emergency door, centre toilet/servery, crew compartment, 3 roof vents, forced air ventilation, ishringhausen drivers seat, courier seat, 49 reclining seats, brown moquette, double glazed, side blinds, rear curtains, radiomobile radio/Pa system. MoT. 01.10.95, **choice of 4.**

VOLVO B10M-51 DUPLE 340

1985, To completely refurbished with 51 reclining seats and toilets, repainted to customers colours, MoT 18.08.95.

VAN HOOL T815 INTEGRAL

1991, Cummins L10 290 BHP engine, ZF HP 600 auto gearbox with integral reatarder, sutrak air conditioning, autolube, variable top speed limiter, road speed governor, kneel facility, ferry lift, Webasto heating, brown moquette, 53 reclining seats plus courier ishringhausen drivers seat, plug door, half rear emergency door, 2 roof air vents, double glazed, side blinds, rear curtains, radiomobile radio/Pa system, MoT. 16.01.96. **Choice of 3.**

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1989, 15 coach seats, tinted glass, grey/chevron moquette, white exterior, MoT 30.09.95 private plate.

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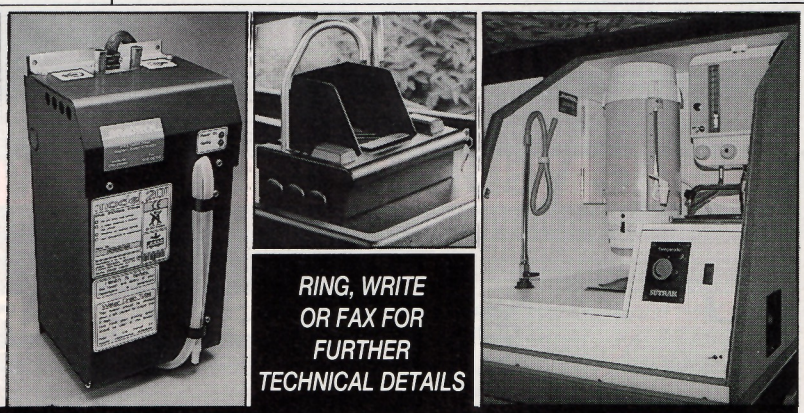

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Coach drivers' wage rates: survey results

A big response to our Research File shows some operators pay drivers twice as much as others

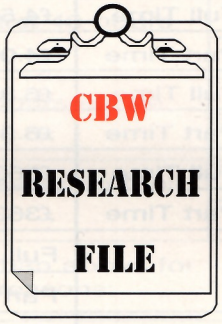
Full-time drivers paid up to £418 for a seven-day tour

ONCE again, the Research File survey drew a considerable response. This perhaps says something about the degree of interest in coach driver wage rates - the largest single item in coach costings. Those who responded will remember that I had asked for the maximum gross wage for the first 40 hours worked in a week (*CBW*, 13 May).

I adopted this question to avoid distortions which could have arisen had I asked for the basic hourly rate - for I feared that, in some cases, there might be hours for which no pay was awarded. I had in mind meal breaks, waiting time at destinations or between contracts. I wanted to be in a position to compare like with like, hence the form of that question.

However, in reporting the findings of the survey, to facilitate comparisons, I have reduced this to a gross hourly rate. My concern about this may have had some foundation, for 15 per cent of all respondents indicated that full-time drivers would be paid less per hour for time over 40 hours than they were getting as this 'base rate'.

One related thing which this survey does show is that there is, in fact, very little overtime enhancement paid - only 15 per cent of respondents pay more for hours in excess of 40. Fifty per cent pay the same.



Although part-timers are generally paid less, the difference is not significantly staggering. This perhaps reflects the fact part-time drivers are only paid for chargeable hours, while there is an element of unproductive time in full-time driver wages. Two respondents seem to believe this to be the case - for they actually pay part-time drivers more than full-time employees.

There was, however, a surprisingly significant number of respondents who simply do not employ part-timers and put 'n/a' in reply to the part-time questions. Even more strikingly, the reluctance to send part-time drivers on tours was thus made apparent. The scarcity of replies showing a rate of pay for a part timer doing a tour has resulted, in some regional summaries, in the average for part-time drivers on this work at a higher figure than that paid to full-time drivers.

Each of these surveys has produced a lot of fairly predictable material, and a few absolute surprises. One of the latter is visible from the tables below: that the highest hourly rate is not in London, but comes from Scotland. What is, however, not detectable is that the Scottish operator paying the highest full-time full-time 'base' rate as well as the highest 'overtime' rate - also clocks the lowest national rate for part timers on both counts.

My final comment relates to the 78 per cent of operators who pay full time drivers enhanced rates, or give paid time off in lieu, for work on Bank Holidays. While there may be a commercial or contractual necessity to do this, I rather suspect that it may indicate a belief in a legal entitlement to 'pay in lieu'. There is no such entitlement in law.

NATIONAL SUMMARY		HIGHEST	AVERAGE	LOWEST
Maximum gross hourly rate for first 40 hours worked in a week	Full Time	£6.00	£4.03	£3.00
	Part Time	£5.00	£3.64	£2.05
Maximum gross hourly rate for hours above 40 in a week	Full Time	£8.00	£4.22	£3.00
	Part Time	£6.35	£3.75	£2.05
Maximum gross pay for 7 days away on tour	Full Time	£418	£268	£183
	Part Time	£363	£254	£138
Operators paying a lower rates than above for probationary, seasonal or other reasons:		Full Time		20%
		Part Time		23%
Operators paying enhanced rates or giving paid time off for work done on Bank Holidays:		Full Time		78%
		Part Time		27%

COACH DRIVERS' WAGES REGIONAL SURVEY

LONDON & SOUTH EAST		HIGHEST	AVERAGE	LOWEST
Maximum gross hourly rate for first 40 hours worked in a week	Full Time	£5.00	£4.58	£3.90
	Part Time	£5.00	£4.04	£3.74
Maximum gross hourly rate for hours above 40 in a week	Full Time	£6.00	£4.67	£3.90
	Part Time	£5.00	£4.12	£3.74
Maximum gross pay for 7 days away on tour	Full Time	£418	£295	£218
	Part Time	£245	£275	£200
Operators paying a lower rates than above for probationary, seasonal or other reasons:		Full Time		NONE
		Part Time		NONE
Operators paying enhanced rates or giving paid time off for work done on Bank Holidays:		Full Time		71%
		Part Time		29%

CENTRAL SOUTHERN ENGLAND		HIGHEST	AVERAGE	LOWEST
Maximum gross hourly rate for first 40 hours worked in a week	Full Time	£4.55	£4.04	£3.80
	Part Time	£4.00	£3.88	£3.75
Maximum gross hourly rate for hours above 40 in a week	Full Time	£6.35	£5.38	£4.00
	Part Time	£6.35	£4.70	£3.75
Maximum gross pay for 7 days away on tour	Full Time	£363	£288	£213
	Part Time	£363	£363	£363
Operators paying a lower rates than above for probationary, seasonal or other reasons:		Full Time		NONE
		Part Time		NONE
Operators paying enhanced rates or giving paid time off for work done on Bank Holidays:		Full Time		100%
		Part Time		33%

WEST COUNTRY		HIGHEST	AVERAGE	LOWEST
Maximum gross hourly rate for first 40 hours worked in a week	Full Time	£4.00	£3.56	£3.00
	Part Time	£4.00	£3.56	£3.00
Maximum gross hourly rate for hours above 40 in a week	Full Time	£4.00	£3.63	£3.00
	Part Time	£4.00	£3.63	£3.00
Maximum gross pay for 7 days away on tour	Full Time	£256	£223	£203
	Part Time	£224	£212	£203
Operators paying a lower rates than above for probationary, seasonal or other reasons:		Full Time		25%
		Part Time		25%
Operators paying enhanced rates or giving paid time off for work done on Bank Holidays:		Full Time		50%
		Part Time		25%

EAST ANGLIA		HIGHEST	AVERAGE	LOWEST
Maximum gross hourly rate for first 40 hours worked in a week	Full Time	£4.53	£4.25	£3.58
	Part Time	£4.00	£4.22	£3.50
Maximum gross hourly rate for hours above 40 in a week	Full Time	£5.00	£4.06	£3.63
	Part Time	£5.00	£4.01	£3.50
Maximum gross pay for 7 days away on tour	Full Time	£301	£273	£244
	Part Time	£138	£138	£138
Operators paying a lower rates than above for probationary, seasonal or other reasons:		Full Time		40%
		Part Time		20%
Operators paying enhanced rates or giving paid time off for work done on Bank Holidays:		Full Time		80%
		Part Time		40%

COACH DRIVERS' WAGES REGIONAL SURVEY

MIDLANDS		HIGHEST	AVERAGE	LOWEST
Maximum gross hourly rate for first 40 hours worked in a week	Full Time	£4.75	£3.87	£3.00
	Part Time	£4.35	£3.59	£3.00
Maximum gross hourly rate for hours above 40 in a week	Full Time	£4.75	£3.86	£3.00
	Part Time	£4.35	£3.59	£3.00
Maximum gross pay for 7 days away on tour	Full Time	£333	£277	£230
	Part Time	£280	£244	£208
Operators paying a lower rates than above for probationary, seasonal or other reasons:		Full Time		25%
		Part Time		34%
Operators paying enhanced rates or giving paid time off for work done on Bank Holidays:		Full Time		100%
		Part Time		29%

YORKSHIRE & NORTHERN ENGLAND		HIGHEST	AVERAGE	LOWEST
Maximum gross hourly rate for first 40 hours worked in a week	Full Time	£4.00	£3.67	£3.25
	Part Time	£3.60	£3.44	£3.25
Maximum gross hourly rate for hours above 40 in a week	Full Time	£6.00	£4.07	£3.25
	Part Time	£3.60	£3.44	£3.25
Maximum gross pay for 7 days away on tour	Full Time	£318	£272	£208
	Part Time	£308	£293	£252
Operators paying a lower rates than above for probationary, seasonal or other reasons:		Full Time		20%
		Part Time		20%
Operators paying enhanced rates or giving paid time off for work done on Bank Holidays:		Full Time		60%
		Part Time		25%

WALES		HIGHEST	AVERAGE	LOWEST
Maximum gross hourly rate for first 40 hours worked in a week	Full Time	£4.50	£3.66	£3.33
	Part Time	£3.40	£3.13	£3.00
Maximum gross hourly rate for hours above 40 in a week	Full Time	£4.50	£4.04	£3.67
	Part Time	£4.00	£3.50	£3.00
Maximum gross pay for 7 days away on tour	Full Time	£290	£245	£200
	Part Time	£290	£240	£210
Operators paying a lower rates than above for probationary, seasonal or other reasons:		Full Time		25%
		Part Time		34%
Operators paying enhanced rates or giving paid time off for work done on Bank Holidays:		Full Time		75%
		Part Time		NONE

SCOTLAND		HIGHEST	AVERAGE	LOWEST
Maximum gross hourly rate for first 40 hours worked in a week	Full Time	£6.00	£4.39	£3.45
	Part Time	£4.17	£3.08	£2.05
Maximum gross hourly rate for hours above 40 in a week	Full Time	£8.00	£4.57	£3.10
	Part Time	£3.00	£3.08	£2.05
Maximum gross pay for 7 days away on tour	Full Time	£310	£263	£183
	Part Time	£274	£374	£274
Operators paying a lower rates than above for probationary, seasonal or other reasons:		Full Time		25%
		Part Time		25%
Operators paying enhanced rates or giving paid time off for work done on Bank Holidays:		Full Time		75%
		Part Time		25%

Decker for young...

ACCUSTOMED to buses of the more sober kind lined up for installation of a DIWA service exchange transmission, Voith Engineering staff were surprised when a double decker rolled up owned by the Lincolnshire charity, the South Holland Play Association — proof that there's life without an O-licence disc for the humble PSV.

Since a permanent, central playground would have been impractical for everyday use, the play association, together with Lincolnshire County Council, came up with the idea of a mobile playground.

An MCW Metroliner was purchased and its seating replaced by play equipment. Last year it clocked up 5,000 miles as it operated four days a week, visiting 13 villages for two-hour play sessions.

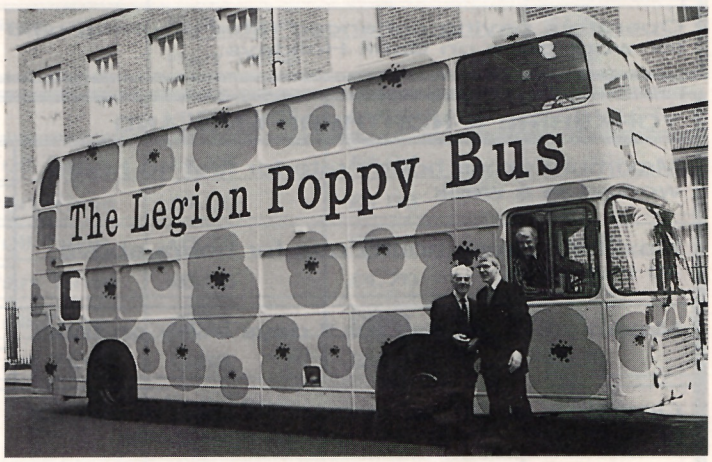
...and old decker soldiers on

FURTHER proof that old PSVs soldier on is the Oxford Bus Company's 17-year-old Bristol VR which got a Downing Street send-off in its new life as the Royal British Legion's PoppyBus.

The bus was officially launched by Prime Minister John Major and began a nationwide, 3,000-mile tour publicising the charity, which acts for 16 million eligible ex-servicemen and women.

"Without this generous gift we simply could not have gone ahead with the promotion," said its tour manager David France, a former producer for Radio 4's Going Places.

The GAN subsidiary's engineering manager Peter Grimes said the demand coincided with fleet replacements: "And we think it is a very worthwhile cause on the 50th anniversary of VE Day." The RBL is now appealing to bus companies during its travels to help out with maintenance and fuel. CBW



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SEAT BELTS

SAFETY DEBATE+++SAFETY DEBATE+++SAFETY DEBATE+++SAFETY DEBATE+++SAF

Is a coach fitted with seatbelts safer than one without in the event of an accident? Below, readers have their say

Compulsory fitting of seatbelts in coaches and minibuses used for school transport could be the biggest single change to rock the industry since the 1920s. The issue has provoked a bumper postbag

LETTER OF THE WEEK

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Saddened by the CPT

From Andrew Richmond

The attitude taken by the industry's trade association over the fitment of seatbelts has really saddened me over the past year or so.

On one hand the CPT promotes our industry as professional and one that is concerned about safety. However, the same organisation has been using all its power to obstruct the fitment of seatbelts, giving every conceivable reason why the Government should not take action.

As EC legislation already exists to cover the fitment of seatbelts on new coaches and coachbuilders have been supplying vehicles that meet these requirements for some time I fail to see why legislation could not be introduced immediately on all new vehicles.

The public already has a low opinion of our industry and the stance taken by the CPT has only made things worse. In my view the seatbelts issue was an ideal opportunity to show the public that our industry does care and that it is prepared to pay the small price for added safety, ending what has been an unnecessarily protracted argument that has damaged our industry's credibility.

I am in no doubt a vehicle fitted with seatbelts is going to be safer than one without. If seatbelts save just one life they have to be worthwhile. The cost of fitting seatbelts cannot be compared to the cost of a life or, indeed, to the financial cost of a personal injury claim. I feel it is time the CPT took a positive attitude towards anything that improves the public's confidence in the industry. It is time they showed they are a professional body representing professional operators.

Andrew Richmond
Managing director
Epsom Coaches
Epsom
Surrey

Write to: The Editor
Coach and Bus Week
EMAP Response Publishing
Wentworth House
Wentworth Street,
Peterborough, PE11DS
or fax 01733 62656

The editor is always pleased to receive letters for publication in *Coach and Bus Week* and will, if requested, publish these anonymously. But please attach your full name (ie first name and surname) and address for our information.

CORGI CLASSICS

Letter of the week wins a Corgi Classics model bus

TY DEBATE+++SAFETY DEBATE+++SAFETY DEBATE+++SAFETY DEBATE+++SAFETY

Fears over proposals

From Jean Eggington

I am concerned about the proposals on the fitting of seatbelts in coaches and minibuses.

If it does become law are they expecting the driver to enforce it?

On many occasions school children travel to and fro unsupervised. I have often seen parents collect their children off the coach, put them in the car and drive off not bothering with seatbelts.

Also I would like to know about other forms of public transport - ie buses, trains, taxis and, in some cases, trams. Will they come under the seatbelt legislation?

We are an operator in agreement with John Morris (*CBW*, 3 June).

Jean Eggington
C&J Travel
Willenhall
Wolverhampton

They're moneybelts

From John Shawcross

With regard to the article by Mark Williams (*CBW*, 20 May) concerning "increasing demands for seatbelts" I can report that, since fitting seatbelts to the fleet, we have experienced a better than anticipated response to our invitation.

We seek no premium for belts-fitted vehicles and the only advertisement is small lettering to the vehicles' rear windows.

We fully expect to recoup the initial outlay by the year end simply through extra profit generated by increased bookings.

Therefore, I can state that, in our case seatbelts are a positive step forward to greater profit.

John Shawcross
Operations manager
Turbostyle Coaches Ltd
Crawley
Sussex

Another article

From Alan Bonson

Following Marksman's bombshell article (*CBW*, 27 May) implying all coaches over eight years old might as well be scrapped, can I suggest another article I am sure will be of help to your readers and the industry?

At present there is no clear indication just which vehicles could be retrofitted with belts and which could not, and it will not be long before 'cowboys' start contacting us telling us it would be no problem to fit this vehicle etc. Rather than have the vehicle manufacturers (where they still exist!) being rung up by all the worried operators in the country, could *CBW* do this and publish a definitive list?

What would also be useful is that, if a vehicle cannot be retrofitted in its present form, can we be told why not and if there is a solution what it is, ie fitting a new type of seat etc? There must be something which could be done before vehicles which are not life expired are sent to the breakers prematurely.

I hope you may be able to do something in this line.

Alan Bonson
Partner JAK Travel Services
Bradford
West Yorks

PS: Question for Marksman
With the seatbelt legislation as it is proposed, if I have our coach speed limiters reduced to 60 mph (as the Government originally wanted) will we be exempt from having to fit belts?

This is a major issue

From Kathryn Bonson

Once again, a recent accident has thrown the issue of coach and bus travel sharply into focus, with much of the debate focused on the seatbelts issue.

While many of the arguments on this issue remain to be cleared up, there is almost universal agreement that a major contribution to road safety of all types is through increased driver training.

It is, therefore, a matter of great concern to everyone to hear that driver training standards are being currently seriously compromised in Calderdale (*CBW*, 17 June).

During a recent round of re-tendering for Calderdale Social Services transport contracts, coach and bus operators were given less than one day's notice they had been awarded instead to Calderdale's own Transport Services.

In some cases they had been performing these contracts successfully and safely for over 20 years and no reason was given for this change.

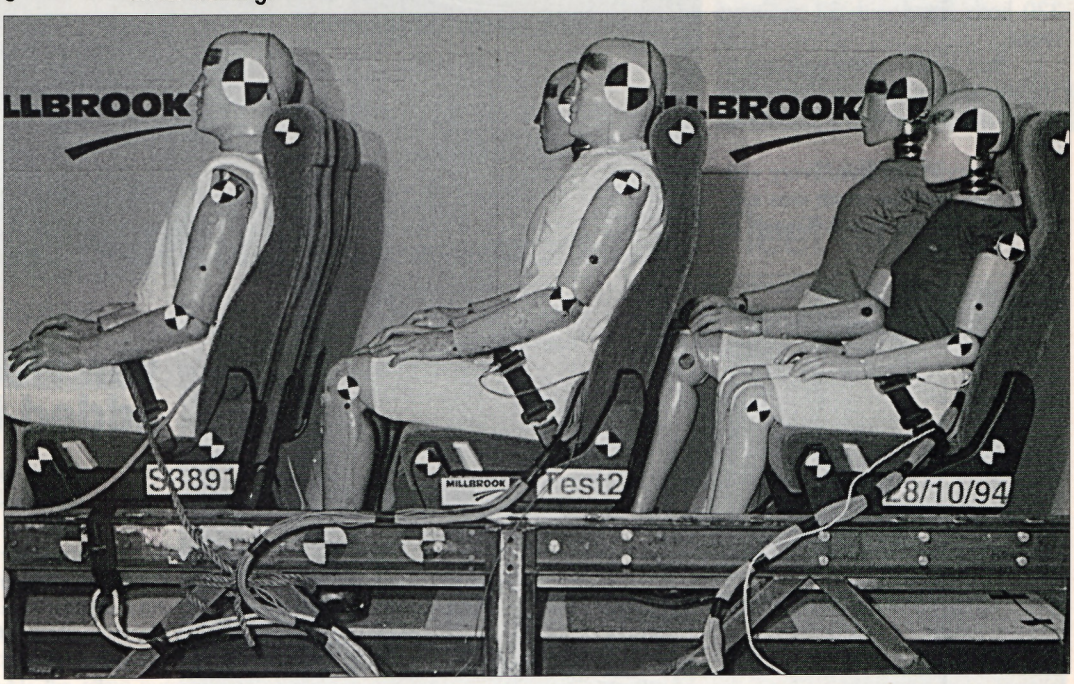
Calderdale Transport Services is operated by the local authority. Because of a loophole in the regulations, Department of Transport vehicles inspectors have no jurisdiction over the operation or maintenance of their vehicles.

Calderdale Transport drivers do not have to take a Department of Transport coach driving test - unlike all drivers in the private sector. They have taken an in-house test known as a blue card - which allows them to drive a minibus with up to 16 passengers including children.

The standards for this are not pre-defined and in some cases involve simply driving a vehicle around the block. With this blue card, drivers would not be allowed to drive a Public Service Vehicle.

We think this is a major issue - especially as it is happening in several other local authority areas too, including Bradford and Leeds, and that it is one that should be brought out into the open and challenged.

Kathryn Bonson
Bradford & District Coach Operators Assoc
Bradford
West Yorks



Seatbelts have been tested for new vehicles, but can they be retrofitted satisfactorily?

Volvo B10Ms will be used on UK and Continental holidays for Fishwick's and major tour operators

KIRKBY

Fishwick invests in high-spec Excaliburs

by Mike Morgan

TWO Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10Ms have joined the small coach fleet operated by leading Lancashire bus operator Fishwick of Leyland.

Both are high-specification Excaliburs supplied by Kirkby Coach & Bus. They are fitted with air-conditioning, washroom and drinks machines and they join two Premieres already in the Fishwick fleet.

"We are very pleased with the Excaliburs," said John Brindle, general manager of the family-owned firm. "We are using them on UK and Continental touring which includes our own holiday programme and work for major tour operators, too."

Fishwick's tours cater for customers throughout north west England and the company runs seven front-line coaches in its 60-strong fleet.

Founded in 1907, the bulk of the company's work is the provision of bus services in the Preston and Chorley area. It has operated coaches since 1960.

YEATES

Disabled considered

WGORDON & Sons, trading as Gordons of Rotherham, has bought a new Plaxton-bodied coach fitted with a side-mounted wheelchair lift.

Built on Volvo B10M chassis, the coach has Plaxton's Premiere 320 body fitted with 53 reclining seats.

But, with seating reduced to 28, the vehicle can accommodate up to six passengers in wheelchairs.

Livery is Gordons' ivory with red stripes and the coach was supplied by Yeates Bus & Coach of Loughborough.

HUGHES DAF

Van Hool-bodied DAF added to Leask's fleet

JOHN Leask & Son, travel agent and passenger transport operator of the Shetland Isles, has added a new Van Hool-bodied DAF to its 19-vehicle fleet.

Supplied by Cowie Group subsidiary, Hughes DAF of Cleckheaton, the new coach is based on SB3000 underframes and will be used on Lerwick-based Leask's private-hire and day-excursion work. The company also operates local bus services on the island.

CBW

MOSELEY

First new coach for BIC

The Bova Futura FHD will complement the six-coach fleet and brisk business could lead to further new purchases

by Mike Morgan

BIRMINGHAM International Coaches turned to Moseley (PCV) of Doncaster for the supply of its first new 12-metre coach.

The six-coach operation formed from a merger with Allenways three years ago is a sister company of Claribel. Dave Watkiss is chairman and his sons, Andrew, Nigel and Matthew, are directors.

Matthew Watkiss said the latest vehicle, a Bova Futura FHD, was a fleet addition to run alongside two Royal Tiger Doyens, Duple 425, Duple 340/DAF and a 29-seater.

He said brisk business could justify further purchases later this year - possibly up to two new full-size coaches.

The Bova has already embarked on Continental trips to Italy and France. When *CBW* phoned it was en-route to Boulogne with a party of battlefield enthusiasts.

It has 51 reclining seats with seatbelts fitted, centre sunken toilet, drinks machine, two fridges, two-colour monitor video installation, and tinted double-glazing.

WRIGHT

Airports choose Wrights NimBus

BRITISH Airways selected Wright NimBus bodywork for its fleet of 33 Mercedes-Benz air crew buses at London's Heathrow and Gatwick airports - the first Wright products sold into this expanding market.

The first 20 NimBuses are 7.6-metre 13 seaters on 711D chassis/cowls for Heathrow Airport and will transport short-haul flight and cabin crew between the airline's new operations centre and their aircraft.

These will be followed by 13 larger vehicles for long-haul crews at Gatwick - 8.5-metre 21 seaters based on 814Ds.

All 33 are expected to have an eight-year life with BA. They were specified with automatic transmission and low-emission Euro II engines.

Each has tables and a large rear luggage compartment with space for one overnight suitcase per passenger. In addition, they have floor-level space for the same numbers of hand-luggage.

BARTON

Fleet expands

CO KILDARE-based Bartons Transport is operating two new coaches supplied by Barton Coach Services.

Barton Transport has a fleet of 23 vehicles running out of Maynooth.

Work operated includes private hire, scheduled express coach services, local bus service, day excursions, and British tours.

The latest fleet additions have 53-seat Van Hool Alizee bodies mounted on DAF Bus SB3000WS underframes.

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ADVERTS REQUIRING PROOFS

To improve the quality of service that CBW provides to both readers and advertisers, various deadlines throughout the magazine will change. Any adverts requiring proofs must now be in the CBW office by

4.30 pm on Mondays.

Thanks for your co-operation.

Minis & Midis FEATURE

BRITISH operators have shown their European counterparts a glimpse of the future with the mini bus revolution.

For almost 10 years smaller vehicles have been making an impact on our coach and bus scene, as an innovative solution to regenerating business and improving quality of service.

It took a change in legislation, in the form of 1986 deregulation, to force a major switch in demand away from full-size coaches and buses - but it was change which has matured over the last decade into specialist vehicles for specific needs.

Back in pre-deregulation days the number of PSVs on the road with less than 16 seats hovered around 6,000. Today it is over 9,000. That's a 50 per cent growth achieved by a dramatic increase in new vehicle sales in 1987 and fuelled by further increases over the past five years.

The minibus found its niche and tendering authorities recognised its ability to access housing estates with narrow roads - particularly in connection with Dial-a-ride and other wheelchair accessible services.

But there has been a second shift in demand which has resulted in mushrooming sales in the 17-35 sector - midibuses.

Pre-deregulation there were 3,100 midis on the road. Since then the increase has been almost five-fold.

Together minis and midis have more than doubled in number since 1985/6 to around one-third of the vehicle parc. Consequently they are relatively young vehicles in an ageing UK coach and bus fleet.

However, the trends not only look set to continue, but the early mini/midi purchases are now nearing the end of their working life and ready for imminent replacement.

Coach operators appreciate the customer appeal of the smaller vehicle. Groups of 10, 25 or 35 do not enjoy 'rattling around' in a 53-seater.

Although the dramatic changes have affected local work where nearly one-third of all mileage is in the hands of the mini/midi, there has been a steady rise in non-local business for this type of vehicle.

Since 1985/86 mini-business has moved from 23 per cent to 28 per cent and midis operate 14 per cent.

Consequently manufacturers and converters have responded with a range of vehicles, from humble 12-seater to high-spec coaches offering full-size technology and ride comfort.

COACH AND BUS VEHICLE STOCK BY TYPE OF VEHICLE

(Thousands)

	Single deckers			Double deckers	Total
	Up to 16 seats	17-35 seats	36 + seats		
1985/86	6.5	3.1	33.2	25.0	67.9
1993/94	9.4	14.6	30.8	20.1	74.9

VEHICLE STOCK BY TYPE OF OPERATOR

(Percentage)

	Single deckers			Double deckers	Total
	Up to 16 seats	17-35 seats	36 + seats		
Mainly local					
1985/86	2	1	30	66	100
1993/94	4	23	28	45	100
Mixed operators					
1985/86	5	2	69	24	100
1993/94	8	20	57	15	100
Other operators (mainly non-local)					
1985/86	23	11	63	4	100
1993/94	28	14	54	4	100

Source - The Department of Transport, Transport Statistics Report, Bus and Coach Statistics Great Britain: 1993/94.

Say you saw it in CBW

MINIS & MIDIS
FEATURE

1 GALAXY

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(56916/FF/MB)

Minis & Midis Feature

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LDV 400 12 SEAT DIESEL TAIL-LIFT MINI-COACH. Hi-Top LWB. L reg. Jubilee conversion with very high specification & fitted rear tail-lift. Nominal mileage only and terrific condition throughout. Peugeot engined. Outstanding value for money. Please call. *BUY OR FINANCE*

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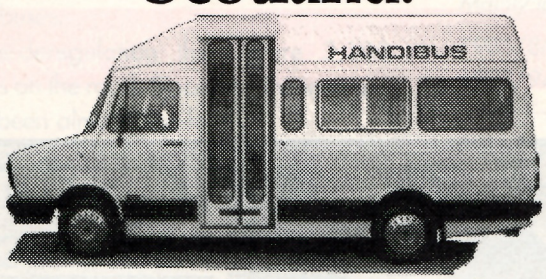

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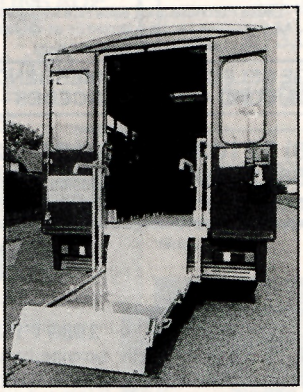

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H Reg LDV 400 Series, Hi-top, Ratcliff lift, hand pump, SLD (full height), diesel (Peugeot engine), 5 speed, 8 seater + wheelchairs, one owner, low mileage.
G Reg RENAULT MASTER T35, diesel, (short wheelbase), 5 speed, 8 seater, side loading door, Rolac lamp, Unwin tracking, low mileage
G Reg LDV 400 Series, Hi-top, Hendeson lift, SLD, diesel (Peugeot engine), 5 speed, 8 seater + wheelchairs, low mileage.
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G Reg TALBOT FREEWAY, 5 speed diesel, 12/16 seater + wheelchairs, power door, PSV specifications, fitted with tail-lift
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F Reg TALBOT FREEWAY, 5 speed, diesel, 16 seater, power door with PSV specifications, fitted with tail-lift
F Reg RENAULT TRAFIC, 5 speed, diesel, 7 seater + 2/3 wheelchairs, Hi-top, side loading door, Rolac ramp, one owner
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E Reg FORD TRANSIT DORMOBILE, 8/10 seats + wheelchairs, Ratcliff tail-lift, very low mileage, 1 owner – local authority
E Reg RENAULT DODGE, 50 series, Dormobile body, turbo diesel, automatic, 16 seater, Ratcliff tail-lift, power steering, one owner, choice of two
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High spec, lux 16 seater minibus, high roof, dual purpose, wheelchair lift, COF for 5 wheelchairs – 2 passengers.

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16 HOUSTON RAMM PCV SALES

1988 F IVECO 49.10, 25 seat service bus, Carlyle Mark II body with 8 standees, power steering, power door, long MoT, extensive service history, green moquette interior with soft trim, excellent condition and value.
£6,995 + VAT

1986 D MERCEDES 608D, 20 seat service bus, Reeve Burgess conversion, 6 standees, power door, new MoT, beige/orange moquette seating, one only at **£6,495 + VAT**

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1988 E K112 VAN HOOL ALIZEE

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(59018/VO)

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Available for 1st August, centre sunken demountable toilet, 49/53 seats, aircraft locker, autumn tint interior, ex parks.

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(56853/VSG)

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1989 G MERCEDES 609, Coachcraft, 24 seater, power door, boot racks, radio/PA.....**£21,500**

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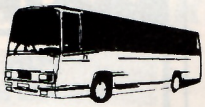
Have you or your company experienced problems with Scania automatic gearboxes on Models K92 ➔ K93, K112 ➔ K113.

We would like to hear from you, as your call may help you.

Please contact: **Channel Coachways Limited**
on 0181-985 1144 or by Fax on 0181-986 8444

(56931/VSG)

MINI - MIDI - LUXURY COACHES



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1992 J FORD TRANSIT NEW GENERATION 2.5DI, 12 seats, fitted 3 point seat belts. White exterior. MoT Nov '95.

1988 E TALBOT EXPRESS 2.5, side door, radio, white exterior MoT Dec '94.

1987 D/E TALBOT 2.5 TRI-AXLE, 20 seats, power door, destination gear, choice of 7,various MoT dates.

1987 D FREIGHT ROVER 2.5, 15 seat, luxury minicoach, MoT October '95.

1986 PP VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 51 seats, rear toilet, video monitor, double glazed, Webasto heating, MoT May '96. SOLD

1986 C FORD TRANSIT 2.5 DI, 16 seats, 5 standees, power door. various MoT's, choice of 6.

1985 B LEYLAND TIGER 245 LASER II, 53 seats, semi auto, power door, destination gear, MoT May '95.

1981 X LEYLAND TIGER CUB DUPLE DOMINANT BUS BODY, 32 seats, standees, power door, destination gear, MoT Jan '96.

1980 V LEYLAND NATIONAL MK II, LEYLAND 680 ENGINES, 41 seats, luggage pen, MoT's Sept and June 95.

1979 T LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON SUPREME IV, 49 seats, semi auto, express doors, Tinted windows, MoT Sept 95.

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(56686/P/VSM)

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(59010/VSM)

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NEW DAF SERVICE BUS, 20 + 3 standees, also welfare, p/doors.

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TRANSIT 8 SEAT TAXIBUS, 1 w/chair, **STOCK.**

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94 TRANSIT 16, high roof, psv.
93 MAZDA, 14 PSV, delivery mileage only.
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92 LEYLAND DAF, 12 diesel, 10,000 miles only.
91 MERCEDES 609, p/door, 24, coach spec, boot.

90 OMNI 12 plus standees/wheelchairs. PSV, Dial-a-ride, Perkins and p/door.

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89 MERCEDES 609, coach spec, 23 seats.
89 CITROEN 14, diesel, PSV.
89 TRANSIT 16, PSV, diesel.

89 CHARISMA 0303 MERC 49 exec.

89 MAZDA DIESEL, 14 seat, PSV tested.
89 FREIGHT ROVER 16, high roof.
89 MERCEDES 208, 12 seat, diesel.
89 LEYLAND DAF, 16, coach spec, high roof.
88 TALBOT TRI-AXLE, 22 + standees, p/door.
88 MERCEDES 609, p/door, 21 seats.

88 TALBOT TRIAXLE, 13+ 2 wheelchairs and lift.

88 VOLVO B10 DUPLE 320, 57 seats.

88 TOYOTA OPTIMO, 16/21 seats.
88 MERC 23, coach spec.
88 TRANSIT 12, diesel, psv, swb.
88 MERC 609, coach spec, 23 seats.
88 TRANSIT, diesel, 11 psv, swb.
88 RENAULT DODGE, 25 service bus, auto.
88 MERCEDES 609, 24 coach, boot.
88 TRANSIT, petrol, 12 seats.
88 F MERCEDES 709, 21 seat, coach spec.
88 FREIGHT ROVER, 16, diesel, PSV coach spec.

87 DAF BERKHOF d/deck exec, 76 + toilet, t/p.

87 IVECO SERVICE BUS, 5 speed, 19 + standees.
87 TALBOT 14, diesel psv, no test.
87 RENAULT DODGE, Man, service, Alexander 23.
86 IVECO, service, 19 + standees.
86 RENAULT DODGE, service bus auto, 25.

86 SETRA DOUBLE DECK EXEC, new test.

86 LEYLAND CUB, 33 + standees, service bus, auto + Telma.

85 C SETRA EXEC, new test, 49 or 53, toilet.

84 VOLVO IRIZA, 49, toilet, exec, retrimmed.

84 DAF BERKHOF EXEC, 49, toilet, TV & video.

84 DAF JONCKHEERE, 49, toilet, exec.

83 DODGE R BURGESS, diesel, auto, 17F door.
82 BEDFORD 35, Plaxton 500 engine.
82 DENNIS PERKINS, auto, Alexander service bus, 50 + standees.
82 BEDFORD PLAXTON 29, p.door.
81 BEDFORD, 53 Duple testing.
80 FORD, 35 seat Duple II.
79 V VOLVO DUPLE II, 50 rec, toilet, tested.
79 FORD, 35 seat, Duple II, Turbo 6 speed.
79 FORD, 31 seat, Duple II, Turbo 6 speed.

78 LEOPARD, fitted wheelchair lift and tracking. Requires testing.

78 LEYLAND LEOPARD EXPRESS, 53 seats.
78 SEDDON GARDNER ALEXANDER, manual box.

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2 x August '92 (K) Mercedes 0303/Plaxton 3500, 51/53, demount wc, water boiler, fridge, video x2, owned since new, full service history with a low mileage,
£95,000 + VAT (MoT 7/95)

2 x Mar '90 (G) DAF SB300 DKV/Van Hool, 51/53, demount wc, water boiler, fridge, video x2, owned since new, full service history,
£80,000 + VAT (MoT 1/96)

2 x April '87 (D) DAF SB2300 DHS/ Van Hool, 55 seats (max), at present 51, demount wc, water boiler, video x2, owned since new, full service history.
£50,000 + VAT (MoT 3/96)

1 x February '86 (C) Leyland Royal Tiger/Plaxton 3500, 51 seats, demount wc, water boiler, video x2, 5 x tables, owned since new.
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For more information contact:
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(56817/VSG)

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LEYLAND NATIONAL MKI SELECTION, straight from service, some with long tests.

MKI & II RENAULT DODGE S56, Reeve Burgess & Northern Counties, 1985/1986 25 seat automatic.

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FOR SALE

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1981 B58 Air/Leaf Irizar body, 46 retrimmed seats, toilet, servery, video etc., private plate, 46 retrimmed seats + courier, repainted white, test Jan.

LEYLAND TIGERS

1983 Duple Dominant Express, 53 retrimmed seats (grey & blue), new tyres, painting this week (customers colours possible), semi-auto gearbox, tested, choice.
1988 Duple Goldliner, Dom IV, double glazing, 55 reclining seats, semi-auto, DAF11.6, repainted white, testing soon.

LEYLAND LEOPARDS

1976 Duple Dominant Service Bus, single door, 53 d.p. seats, test Oct.
1980 Duple Dominant II Express, 49 seats, test May/June '96, choice.
1982 Willowbrook 003 Express, 47 seats, test May '96.
1983 ECW B51 Express, 51 Duple seats, repainted white, full test.

LEYLAND NATIONAL

1977, single door, 49 seats, 1 x test Sept, 1 x test due.

LEYLAND AN68

1976, Roe body, 49 seats, test Jan '96.

BEDFORD

1976 YMT Plaxton Supreme, 53 seats, power door, April '96 test.

BRISTOL

1977 Plaxton Supreme L.H.S. 35 seats, power door, April '96 test.

MINIBUS

1987 Freight Rovers 16 bus/coach seats, power doors, tested, choice.
1987/8 MCW Metroriders, 25 coach seats, auto gearboxes, repainted white, tested, choice.

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(56953/VSG)

Make/Model	Year	Annual Test Exp	Seats	Facilities
Volvo, Plaxton Paramount Low Driver	1992 (K)	21.3.96	53	TV, Video
Volvo, Plaxton Paramount Low Driver	1992 (K)	21.3.96	51	TV, Video, Coffee M, WC
Scania, Plaxton Paramount	1993 (K)	17.10.95	53	TV, Video
Scania, Plaxton Paramount Low Driver	1992 (K)	21.3.96	55	TV, Video
Scania, Plaxton Premiere	1993 (K)	18.10.95	53	TV, Video
Dennis, Berkhof Excel.	1994 (L)	11.9.95	51	TV, Video, Coffee M, WC, FR
Dennis, Berkhof Excel.	1994 (L)	18.12.95	51	TV, Video, Coffee M, WC, FR
Toyota, Caetano	1992 (K)	6.10.95	21	Radio/Cassette, Table
Toyota, Caetano	1992 (K)	19.9.95	21	Radio/Cassette, Table
DAF, Paramount	1986 (C)	13.3.96	49/53	Radio/Cassette, TV, Video, WC

Please note all of the above vehicles have been owned by ourselves from new and all are in excellent condition.

We also have the following contract for vehicles for sale:

Ford, Duple	1978 (S)	15.3.96	53
Ford, Duple	1975 (P)	2.5.96	53
Ford, Plaxton	1981 (X)	7.12.95	45
Ford, Plaxton	1976 (P)	20.6.96	53
Ford, Plaxton	1979 (V)	24.4.96	53

For more information on any of the above vehicles, please contact Mr Gordon Mayne

Mayne's Coaches
March Road Industrial Estate, Buckie, Banffshire, AB56 2BY
Tel. 01542 831219

(59006/VSM)

A V E BERKHOF

1992 (NOV) TOYOTA OPTIMO II, 16/18 seats, crew seat, large boot, radio, interior grey, exterior white/blue/red. MoT 3/11/95.

1991 VOLVO B10M IKARUS BLUE DANUBE 358, 49 recliners, centre continental door, double glazing, curtains, large luggage capacity, interior fawn/orange, exterior red/grey. MoT 12/2/96. Choice of 3.

1989 (G) VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 51 recliners, crew seat, rear sunken toilet, inswung entrance door, radio/tape, wired for video, interior fawn/brown, exterior light green/yellow/brown. MoT 14/3/96.

1989 SCANIA K112 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 4000, 67 recliners, 2 crew seats, toilet, large fridge, Webasto, retarder, double glazed, radio/tape/PA, 4 tables, interior fawn, exterior white/red/yellow. MoT 8/1/96.

1989 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 49 reclining seats, crew seat, centre sunken toilet, side window blinds, aircraft style rack locker doors. Interior fawn/brown, exterior white, no signwriting. MoT 29/3/96.

1988 (E) DAF MB230 DFKL CAETANO ALGARVE, 51 recliners, sunken toilet, rear continental door, crew seat, power door, Peage window, radio/tape, drinks machine, tinted windows, ferry lift and kneeling suspension, wired for video. Interior grey/red, exterior white unsignwritten. MoT 15/5/95.

1986 MERCEDES 0303 RHD, 49 recliners, crew seat, centre continental door, sunken toilet, Webasto, fridge, hot water boiler, side window blinds, radio/tape and wired for video, driver's bunk, Voith retarder. Interior grey, exterior white/blue/turquoise. MoT 11/2/96.

1995 LEYLAND TIGER 245 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 46 recliners, saloon toilet, rear servery. Interior fawn/brown, exterior red/grey. MoT 12/1/96.

1982 (AUG PP) MAN SR280, 49 recliners, rear mounted toilet, continental door, Voith retarder, side window blinds. Interior fawn, exterior white/red/yellow. MoT 13/4/96.

Telephone: 01344 861787 Fax: 01344 860780
David Waterman 0836 573535/01725 512304
Maurice Bateman 0831 826435/01787 475472
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1990 LEYLAND DAF 400, 16 seater.

1983 DAF DUPLE CONTINENTAL, 48 seater exec (superb).

1983 DAF LAG, 48 seater exec.

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WRIGHT CONTOUR 1984, 57 str, Bedford YNT 500, h.Blow turbo, white ext, plug door, side lockers, rad pa, new engine, modern coach, MoT April '96.....**£15,000**

DOMI III 1982 BEDFORD YMT, 53 str, 500, Phase II, express doors, red/cream ext, rad pa. MoT April '96.....**£8,000**

PLAXTON SUPREME 1976 AEC, 53 str, reseated 1 yr, Bristol Dome, white, blue grey stripe, manual door. MoT April '96.....**£3,000**

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1986 OPTARE, test May 1996 .....**£5,000 + VAT**

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1984 MAN, 28 seater, test May 1996.....**£7,500 + VAT**

Please phone for more details on

01234 352547

(56844/VSG)

1987 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON 3500, 50 recliners, rear sunken toilet, tinted double glazing, retrimmed Feb '95, resprayed all white, Volvo exchange engine with 2 years warranty fitted last week – full year's MoT, immaculate.

1984 PLAXTON 3500, DAF SB2300 DHS, 49 seater exec, tinted windows, toilet, video etc.

PX considered on above coaches, particularly straight 53 seater Volvo Van Hools.

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Ask for David

(56958/VSG)

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Manual, MkIV front, excellent condition
£2,250
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1982, to be tested, 18 seater
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1978, 70 seats, no test.
£4,000
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16 seater diesel, moquette, low back seats, MoT April '96, good condition
£2,900
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(56426/VU5)

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57 seats, manual gearbox, excellent order
£4,000 ono
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20 luxury seats, luggage racks, boot, PMT conversion, vgc. P.O.D., MoT March '96, taxed.
£4,900 + VAT
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1971 BRISTOL RE
Reg. No. UTT 560J
Preservation vehicle with Gardner engine.
£1,000 + VAT
Part exchange considered
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Short wheelbase, MoT'd April '96.
£5,000 + VAT ono
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FREIGHT ROVER
16 seats, standees, D reg, POD, diesel, white, unwritten, MoT June '95, VGC throughout.
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2 FORD TRANSITS (D REG)
16 seat (new shape), long MoT's. Service spec.
£4,000 + VAT each
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1977 AEC PLAXTON SUPREME
53 recliners, tinted windows, curtains, power door, MkIV front, full MoT
£4,500 + VAT ono
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(56782/VU5)

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1980, 70 seats, no test.
£4,500 each
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(56812/VU5)

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E Reg, 20 seats S/B, test August '95
£3,250 ono + VAT
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25 seats. Mostly without test.
£2,500 each
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'E' REG FIAT DUCATO LWB DIESEL
with tail-lift
£3,400
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1x16 SEATER
No MoT. £1,500 + VAT.
1x20 SEATER with Isuzu engine
No MoT. £2,000. Both service spec.
Tel. 01495 767888 or 767999
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(56776/VU5)

BRISTOL VRT
Gardner, 5 speed, 1981, 74 seats, tested 21/06/95
£4,999
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(56813/VU5)

D REG TRANSIT SWB DIESEL
with tail-lift.
£3,250
Tel. 0181 881 3336
(56815/VU5)

1987 TALBOT EXPRESS
14 seater, petrol, MoT till Oct '95
£3,000 + VAT ono
PEWSEY VALE COACHES
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16 SEAT FORD B REG TRANSIT DIESEL
Good condition, excellent engine, etc. new tyres, brakes, good contract vehicle
£2,800 + VAT
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1988, CIF. 15 high back seats, all on tracking, tinted windows, full soft trim, hideaway lift.
£5,000
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R reg, single doors, clean tidy, inc. tyres, one noisy engine, one very good
£4,500 + VAT the pair
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(56828/VU5)

E REG FREIGHT ROVER Mk2
20 seat, Carlyle body, vgc, P.O.D., MoT July 1996, taxed.
£4,500 + VAT
Tel. 01267 253464
(56827/VU5)

FIAT DUCATO MAXI 2.5 DIESEL
11 seats, engine expired.
OFFERS AROUND £1,000
Tel. Richard on 01908 510382
Fax. 510301 (56823/VU5)

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12 seats, h/b moquette, recon. engine, taxed/tested.
£1,500
Tel. 01246 222202
(56841/VU5)

FREIGHT ROVER
1988, diesel, test November 1995
£3,500 + VAT
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(56849/VU5)

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1950, ECW Bodywork, partially restored
Offers around £2,500
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£4,500 + VAT
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AEC PLAXTON SUPREME IV
Semi-auto, good service/school bus, 53 seats, good runner.
£3,500 + VAT
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14 seats, h/b moquette, excellent condition
£4,500
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Plaxton Supreme, 'P' Reg, 41 seat, luggage pen, Express doors, manual gearbox, destination equipment
£3,100 ono
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(56866/VU5)

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Dominant Service Bus, 1980 (V), 47 seats, MoT 8/95
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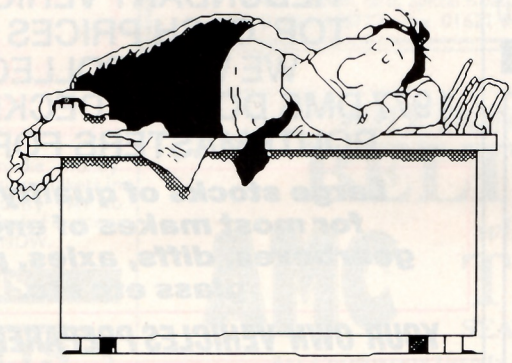

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COACH AND BUS WEEK

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▼ Fuel

Promotions at CH Jones

GORDON Anslow, 39, has been appointed managing director of Walsall-based CH Jones Ltd, the diesel fuel bunkering and management business.

Before joining CH Jones he had senior appointments with the NFC.

He succeeds Alan Laken, who becomes the company's chairman.

▼ PTA

Marshall new chair

COUNCILLOR Danny Marshall has been appointed the new chair of the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority.

Councillor Marshall, a councillor for Newburn for the past 25 years, takes over from Councillor Roy Burgess, who retired in May after 29 years of service to the city of Newcastle and eight years as PTA chair.

▼ Coach

Clocking up 45 years

by Mike Morgan

WALLACE Arnold's longest-serving employee, chief engineer Eric Stockwell, clocked up 45 years service with the company last month, having started as an apprentice fitter after leaving school at 15.

Hailing from a transport-orientated family where his grandfather owned a coach company, Mr Stockwell completed his apprenticeship and rose through the ranks of fitter, foreman, supervisor etc to became group chief engineer, 10 years ago.

He spent his two years National Service with the royal engineers and has been a full member of the Institute of Road Transport Engineers for over 10 years.

Stockwell: apprentice to chief engineer

WA's operations director Stephen Barber describes Eric as a practical hands-on engineer.

"The company regards him very highly and I know he has made hundreds of positive contributions in the field of vehicle design, with chassis manufacturers making a point of consulting him on proposed changes and modifications," he said. CBW

▼ Obituary

Industry loses a good friend

ERIC Mitchell of Tower Coaches, Cleckheaton, has died aged 67.

Tower Coaches was started by Mr Mitchell 15 years ago when his former employer, National Travel East, closed its Heckmondwike depot.

His son, Ian, took over the reins of the three-coach business two years ago when Mr Mitchell retired.

Mr Mitchell made many friends in the industry and several of his former National Travel workmates paid their respects at his funeral.

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The PSV industry's news weekly

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